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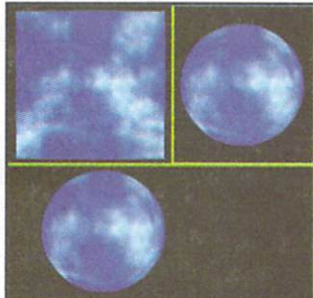


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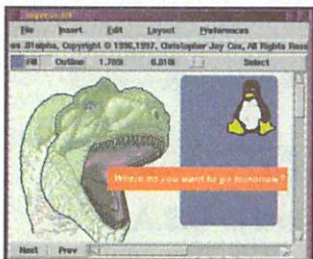
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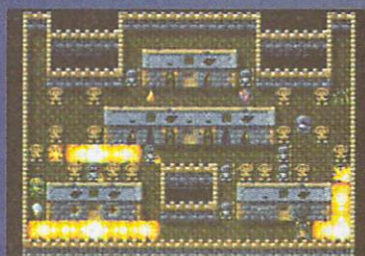


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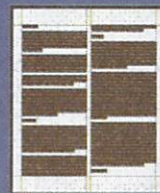
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Editorial Content

San Diego, we have a problem.

I attempt to keep a positive attitude when it comes to the Amiga, I have to. The past several years would have killed a pessimist. But, there are some problems that have been a problem in the past and, I believe, do not need repeating.

A Tale of Two Trade Shows

Several years ago, when the Amiga was at least being produced on a regular basis, there were two companies promoting Amiga shows in North America. One company specialized in World of Amiga and one used the title AmiExpo. For the most part, these shows were well attended, professionally run, and offered a place for Amiga users and vendors to meet.

At some point, it is not important who was at fault initially, one trade organization began to try to out maneuver the other. One company would announce a show and the other would announce one for the same weekend elsewhere. It became so bad that one year, one of the companies decided to hold a show in New York city just a month from the other company's announced date.

Needless to say, even in better days, this was a drastic drain on the resources of the Amiga community. Developers were hard pressed to appear at two events both for the time required as well as the cost (New York can be very expensive) so they were forced to pick and choose. Invariably, this process continued until the promotion companies self destructed for these and other reasons. However, the lesson was learned, you cannot place two events at the same time and expect a great response.

Here we go again

Unfortunately, history is repeating itself. The World of Amiga in London and the AmiWest show in Sacramento, California are both scheduled for the weekend of July 25th. Granted, most people will say that these two shows have a different clientele. The London show is for England and European Amiga users while AmiWest is primarily for the Amiga users on the west coast of the

United States. In a market as small as the current Amiga market, this is still a problem.

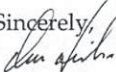
Developers must examine the two shows and decide where they would want to be. Since the London show has been held several years and draws a fair crowd, that would seem to be the answer. But wait, the London show has been held in May each year, while AmiWest is holding their show at the same time as last year. Also, to be fair, AmiWest was announced far in advance of the announcement by World of Amiga London.

Once again, developers are going to be forced to decide between venues and nobody is going to win. Although aware of the problem, at press time, I have not heard whether Amiga Inc. has been able to arrange a solution to the problem.

Amiga president, Jim Collas, has scheduled meetings in London and Germany for other reasons. I hope he can continue the positive message he made at Amiga99 (see the April issue of *Amazing Computing/Amiga*) and his open letter to the Amiga community (please see page 14 in this issue).

In all fairness, I don't know how much clout Mr. Collas will have in getting one of these organizations to back down. I do know that the costs of changing the dates for these events could be considerable. Yet, if we are going to work to strengthen the Amiga market, we must attempt to find solutions to these problems. We must also be aware of how our actions may affect the entire Amiga marketplace.

This may seem a small matter to some people, but I know that having both shows at the same time will weaken each event and, in turn, weaken the Amiga. The Amiga market is too small to make these types of mistakes. We are too small to repeat the same failures of the past.

Sincerely,

Don Hicks

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FEEDBACK

Kudos and Sorrows

Dear AC,

I just read your most recent Editorial, and am writing to thank you for your thoughtful and moving effort. I am very sorry for your loss. My mother is in the midst of a battle with stage 4 colon cancer.

In February of 1998, when the cancer was first discovered, the doctors told her she had only months to live. Thankfully she has proven them wrong thus far. Thanks for having the courage to tackle such a difficult area in your column.

Among other things, your Editorial has motivated me to get a colonoscopy myself. I hope that you will be able to recover from the loss of Mrs. Gamble, and that you and the *Amazing Computing* team will keep the Amiga Faith.

Best Regards,
Mark Habinski, President
Wonder Computers International Inc.

Dear AC

I just received my copy of the new AC today and had to write to tell you how utterly moved I was by your words. I remember now your telling me about your personal losses when we met in St. Louis. I was particularly touched by your willingness to talk about colon cancer in

the magazine and by your zeal in urging others to be tested.

I'm a congregational rabbi in my "day job" (and an Amiga fanatic and AC writer by night, I guess). Having just spent time at the bedside of a member of my synagogue who is dying of cancer earlier today, I was particularly moved by your piece. I cannot imagine anything similar being published in any other computer magazine. This is what makes the Amiga community and AC special, I guess. Bravo.

Great, packed issue, by the way.

All my best,
Steve Folberg

Another one bites the dust.

I'm an old-time computer hobbyist from the early 80s. I've used most every machine ever made. From the crudest kits, to the most horrible pencil-box-sized toys, to a few of the most powerful minis of the day. I even owned most of the desktop models at one time or another.

I'm almost as old-time an Amiga user. From using one of the first 1000s in Southern California, to a 500, to my own 500 traded in on a 3000. I had sold the 3000 in early '94 and was going to get a 4000 when everything hit the fan. I decided to wait and see how things played out. How could I have known it would take more than a year. So I waited, and waited...

I did a lot of traveling around the country over the next few years and I didn't have the time or money for anything new. What little computing I did was on an old Atari, Tandy, and Commodore 8-bit machines I still had. After settling down again I checked out the different fields, (Mac, PC, etc.) and was horrified to find the Amiga not only had no active owner again, but also had not been advanced one bit from where Commodore had left it. So I waited, and waited...

In the fall of '97, I needed a Mac or PC to run a specific software package for a work related project. This was quite a

dilemma for me. I wanted an Amiga, but needed compatibility for this software. I could not afford two machines or justify the cost/performance ratio of emulation. Also, to be cruelly honest, an Amiga at this stage would be pretty limp by today's standards.

Worse yet, I knew the next computer I bought would be it for a long, long time, if not the rest of my life. The audio and video capabilities of today's machines are near the limits of perception for the human senses. Between this fact and the prices, I could not justify buying another one in just two or three years like I used to.

I figured, if it was not an Amiga, the only way I could handle it would be to make a clean, complete break away and never look back. No more magazine or newsletter subs. No more Amiga related website hits. No matter what I learned, if I just missed a new machine, or nothing had changed, knowing it would just be too sad. I think I wouldn't even keep any of my old Info, A/C, or Resource magazines.

I ended up doing what I thought I never would again since getting rid of the last one in the mid 80s. I bought 'a cheap PC clone'. Belch! It's easy to jump on the Microsoft-bashing bandwagon as a matter of policy without thinking or even knowing firsthand, but Windows really IS that bad.

Fortunately, after finishing the work projects, I was able to sell it to my Dad for most of what I paid. Windows-that-week update/fix/enhancement had just come out. No new software would run without it, and IT wouldn't run on anything older than a year, so he was due for his 6-month hardware fix.

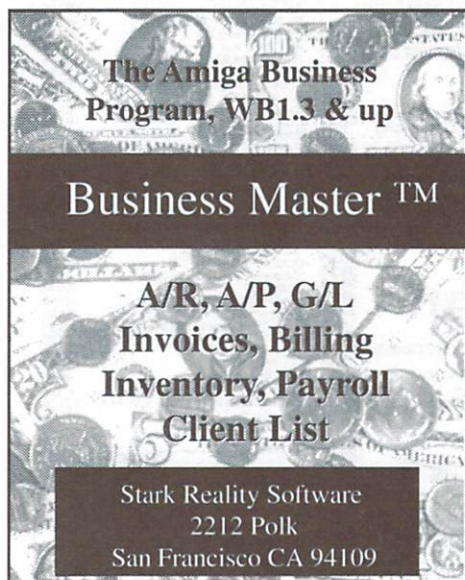
This left me again waiting, and waiting... Another year went by. How long could I possibly 'just keep waiting'...

A couple of weeks ago I bought a new PowerMac G3/350. It's wonderful.

I love it. I'm sorry.

Good-bye,
T.G.
Idyllwild CA

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Unfortunately, we can get attached to our favorite platforms and sometimes this causes us to be blinded by our emotions. Our goal is to get more work done by the best means possible. For many of us, that is still an Amiga. But, Amiga was never the master of all forms of computing—some tools are better at some tasks than others. What you need to do is see where this market is in six months and a year from now. Come and see what the AmigaNG will be doing then and see if it will solve your current needs and a whole lot more.

Dear AC:

I know you don't need a new pen pal, but just a quick word (or a few) of reply since I just received the April Amazing Amiga.

Yes, there is some exciting stuff in this issue. However, for me, it's not Mr. Collas' words (I'll wait and see), instead, it's the review of Amiga Forever v.2! I just checked their website and ordered the CD version. I was about to order a new Dell Latitude, but WHOA... Everything has changed and is on hold because of this one program until I get AF and try it on my office PC.

When the new 500Mhz P-III notebooks hit this summer, I'll have cash and the AF CD in hand. Two for the price of one, and not such a bad price if one factors out the cost of an Amiga 060 accelerator AND new graphics card! Now, a Windoze machine for dealing with the "unwashed" and a blazing Amiga for the same price. That alone would be great, but, a blazing NOTEBOOK Amiga is truly priceless. Maybe I'll even dig out that upgrade offer from Image FX.

THIS is exciting!

Thanks and keep up the great work.
Barlow Soper

Dear AC,

I have to write that I agree with Peter Schaff (AC, March 99) that I, too, miss both the Informer authors and those advertisements not carried in AC. It seems to me that the only "combining" was at the top, and that the only carry over was Fletcher Haug, and by the contents page, not even he will be around every month. It seems to be AC & Informer on the masthead only.

I hope you will be able to persuade those authors and advertisers who were exclusive to the Informer to join you.

And, if you run into trouble I hope you will tell the readership about it and not simply cease publication and "disappear" like so many others. We who are loyal might be willing to help rather than see all Amiga publications bite the dust in the U.S.

Thanks,
Charles Walker
Mountain View CA

P.S. I wouldn't mind a wee bit more color, but paper is great - I hate glossy.

I made a quick tally of the past three issues (I can't count this one, it is still being prepared) to see what the breakdown of authors from Informer and AC has been. In the first issue (Jan/Feb) we had seven Informer authors and six AC authors and in the March and April issues we had five and five. I believe that would make it a fairly even distribution.

Now advertising is a different story. Hardly any of the Informer advertisers have taken advantage of Amazing's offers, even though we call them for each issue. The reason could be we cost more than Informer. However, we carry both the Informer sub list as well as our own and throw in newsstand distribution to boot. In the end, our cost per delivered unit is lower than Informer's was. Yet, we can't force people to advertise, we can only struggle along without them.

As far as more color? You betcha! I want color more than anyone. Color makes design and layout much easier. Unfortunately, with only four advertisers willing to pay for color, it is impossible to do anything more than we do today.

What can you do? Well, first you can tell advertisers that you read Amazing Computing (they might not always believe us). Second, you can contribute to the magazine. This is not a closed shop, everyone is invited to write. It is not a prison either, people do sometimes move on (there are several previous Informer and Amazing authors we wish were still contributing).

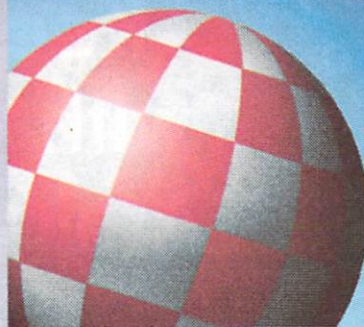
The last suggestion I have is that you keep the faith. Tell your friends about the Amiga. Write Amiga Inc. and remind them that you are waiting for their releases. You should also stay in touch with your dealer even if it is by mail order (drop them a line asking about anything new or visit their sites on the web).

•AC•

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AntiGravity's Interactive BoXeR FAQ, new deal between phase5 and DCE, a new Amiga 99 Banquet Video, and more!

NEW PRODUCTS

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AntiGravity.com adds Alien BoXeR FAQ.

AntiGravity.com staffers have compiled answers to the most common questions about the Alien BoXeR. You'll find them on their new Common Questions page. Just click one of the question buttons to see your answer displayed instantaneously.

If you don't find the answer you are looking for, fill out the simple form to submit your new question. AntiGravity.com will email your answer to you. If your question has been asked by several others, it will soon be added to the Common Questions page. Get weekly updates on the progress of BoXeR development by checking the Alien BoXeR news page.

AntiGravity has stated that BoXeR development is on schedule for the May 15, 1999 shipping date. The first new Amiga since the demise of Commodore can be yours at the special preorder price of only \$1495 until May 15, 1999.

Interactive Ordering

AntiGravity also announced interactive product ordering through their AntiGravity.com web site. Website visitors can now build their own Neila Phase-498 Alien Boxer computer, order it online on their secure server, and be one of the first to receive this exciting new Amiga technology.

Alien Boxer systems start at the low preorder price of \$1495, a savings of \$300, good until the Boxer begins to ship on May 15, 1999.

AntiGravity, 1649 16'th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404, USA, 1-800-7-GRAVITY, Support: 310-399-7446, FAX: 310-399-8262, <http://www.antigravity.com>

Agreement between phase 5 and DCE GmbH

In a press release dated April 28, 1999 from Frankfurt, Germany, Thomas Dellert, managing director of DCE gmbH and Wolf Dietrich, managing director of phase 5 digital products, announced the signing of a contract to hand over the rights of some popular phase 5 products to DCE. The agreement will allow phase 5 to focus on its line of PPC products for the Amiga.

The range of products include the popular Blizzard series of accelerators for the A1200, starting with the 1230-IV (with a 50Mhz 68030), the 1240 T/ERC (with 25Mhz and 40Mhz 68040) and the 1260 (with 50Mhz 68060), plus the SCSI-Kit IV module, that will fit all of them. The A2000 (and A1500) will also be represented by the Blizzard 2040 (with 25 and 40Mhz 68040) and 2060 (with 50Mhz 68060). Both cards include a SCSI controller on board. Finally, at the top end, an accelerator for the A4000 and A3000, the Cyberstorm MkIII which includes a Wide-SCSI III controller and the Cybervision64/3D graphic card with separate Scandoubler module.

DCE and phase 5 believe this will be welcomed by the world-wide Amiga community and that there is still a big market for these products out there. Some of the products should be ready to ship by the end of May. Power Computing LTD will remain the sole distributor for the UK and the rest of the world

(except for Germany, Benelux and France) of these products.

For more information and updates, please contact:

Germany - DCE Computer Service GmbH,
Kellenbergstraße 19a, D-46145 Oberhausen,
Phone: +49-(0)208 660673, Fax: +49 (0) 208 630496

phase 5 digital products - In der Au 27, D-61440 Oberursel, Phone: 49 (0) 6171 583787, Fax: 49 (0) 6171 583789

UK - Power Computing LTD, Unit 82A
Singer Way, Woburn R Ind Estate,
Kempston MK42 7PU, Phone: 01234-51500,
Fax: 0123-855400, or on the web at
www.powerc.com

Aminet 30

Aminet CD 30 was released in April 1999. This new title from the leader in freely distributed Amiga software collections includes GLOOM3.
Stefan Ossowskis Schatztruhe, Gesellschaft
für Software mbH, Veronikastraße 33,
D45131 Essen

Tell Us Sooner!

NCAUG (The National Capital Amiga Users Group from DC Metro) held a special meeting on May 1st, they had a cookout at the offices of Software Hut in West Chester, PA. Aside from special deals for those who attended, they promised food, fun, and a surprise or two. All Amigans were encouraged to attend, you did not need to be a member.

NCAUG is home of the famous Blimp Cam and is one of the most active Amiga User Groups today. They offer the latest in Amiga developments and informations. SIGS supporting the Internet, programming, and video production available to all members.

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Next time, let us know earlier.

Contacts: Bill Borsari -

tekimage@amiga.org,

Mike Skov - skov@moon.jic.com, Software

Hut - softhut@erols.com

New Amiga '99 banquet video available

Amigan-St.Louis and the Amiga Atlanta Company announce the release of the Amiga '99 Banquet Video. Recorded on Saturday March 13, 1999 at the St. Louis Amiga '99 Banquet, this two hour tape includes the events which made the evening so memorable for those who attended. This is not the same tape offered earlier through Amazing Computing.

Notable in this video version of the banquet is the quality of the images and sound. It was shot on a digital camera with audio directly from the speakers podium. The tapes which the speakers played back are presented full-screen instead of shot off the screen by the camera. The audio for the "Hanger AE" video is presented in stereo.

The keynote speakers were NASA astronauts Steven Nagel and Linda Godwin. As the only astronaut married couple, they presented their unique view on the reality of spaceflight and their over one thousand hours in orbit.

Colonel Nagel spoke on the history of computing in the space program as well as the future with the upcoming International Space Station. Linda Godwin showed a 16 minute tape of her mission to the Russian MIR space station which included a six hour space walk while docked to MIR.

As an introduction to the keynote address, Bob Castro of Amiga Atlanta showed his 10 minute tape "The Secret in Hanger AE" which is a behind-the-scenes look at the Amiga computers used by NASA at Cape Canaveral to process telemetry from spacecraft.

You will see during this first-ever television tour of the NASA Amigas, the space shuttle had just undocked from the Russian MIR space station and was sending back real-time data to be displayed on Amiga screens!

Also included on this tape is the address by the new CEO of Amiga Incorporated, Mr. Jim Collas. He spoke on Amigas' recent past (including missteps made by Gateway) and of their plans for the bright Amiga future.

The two hour VHS tape is available for \$19.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling. Subscribers to Amazing Computing can get their copy for only \$16.95 plus shipping. It is also available in the European PAL VHS format for \$24.95 plus shipping.

To order call 1-800-345-3360. Credit cards are accepted. Written orders can be mailed to: PiM Publications Inc. P.O. Box 9490, Fall River, MA 02720

For a written article on the NASA Amigas, visit the Amiga Atlanta website at: www.amigaatlanta.org

For information on next year's "AMIGA 2K" computer show in St.Louis, Missouri, visit www.amiga-stl.com.

New Product Custom Fits Computer Mouse to Your Hand

LS Industries of Clearwater, Florida has introduced a new product that will help the user to better grip, guide, and click their computer mouse. Its new product appropriately called "Mouse Drops" can be placed on any computer mouse or even your keyboard to allow the user to "custom fit" it to their hand. The "drops" are peel-off, sticky-backed, sponge rubber pads with a mouse logo printed on them.

CEO Scott Hoover says, "My hand kept sliding off or clicking the wrong button on my mouse, so I wanted to invent something that would eliminate these and other problems." The backing is simply peeled off and can be placed anywhere on the mouse that makes it more comfortable for the user. The "mouse drops" can also be placed on keyboards to help find often used keys. A package of 6 "mouse drops" is \$1.95 + 75¢ S&H. For more information contact: LS Industries, 621 "E" Street, Clearwater, FL 33756, Tel: 727-444-4456, Fax: 727-446-2839, or Email broogy8@aol.com

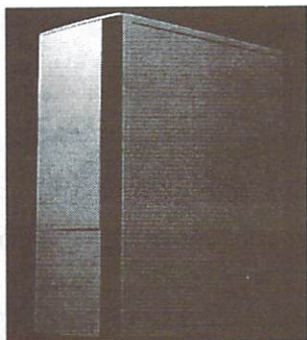
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A Different Perspective:



Things Are Looking Up!

by Fletcher Haug

It has been a good two months for the Amiga. After having hit an all time low morale, I can now honestly say that my enthusiasm and hope has risen several notches in the past two months. And this is due solely to the new leader of Amiga, Jim Collas.

Between the Amiga99 show in St. Louis and his open letter to the Amiga community, Jim Collas has produced a flurry of positive information. Yes, I am still cautious, but there are several things Mr. Collas said that really surprised me. Uncannily, Jim addressed many of the concerns I voiced in my April issue editorial, and it caught me by surprise.

Mr. Collas confessed publicly several times that Amiga Inc. really fumbled their handling of the Amiga. In his open letter, Collas said, "Unfortunately, some of the difficulties the Amiga community has endured in the last two years stem from some misguided decisions made by Amiga Inc." He also said, "...I realize how much our past mistakes have hurt the community and delayed progress." Collas continued by saying, "In my opinion, the biggest mistake was the decision not to evolve the current Amiga architecture as we developed the next generation."

Let me tell you, company Presidents rarely admit to company mistakes publicly, and if they do, it's usually done by a company spokesman. Collas went on to say, "I will not make the mistake again of not understanding the Amiga community, its requirements, and its dynamics." These comments clearly galvanize Collas' position in a very public way. After making these comments, fingers will point to Collas if things go awry. They also show his confidence that he can make things happen.

There are other things that make me confident we have a real leader in Jim Collas. A close friend of mine sent Mr. Collas an email welcoming him to the community. He also gave him a few of his thoughts while he was at it. Within hours, he got a personal reply from Collas, who indicated that he welcomed and agreed with his comments. I can attest to the fact that even magazine editors didn't get replies to emails from the past leader of Amiga. In addition, those that met Mr. Collas all report the belief that he actually gets it. He listens and understands the power and potential of the Amiga community. I suppose he had better get it, considering he's apparently placed his future on the success of the Amiga.

Amiga (and that's their new name, simply "Amiga") has also announced a handful of new executives, including: Dr.

Allen Havemose, VP of Software Engineering (permanently hired now, not just on contract); Jim Von Holle as VP of OEM Sales and Marketing; and Richard Lipes as Director of Software Engineering for graphics and A/V. Others will soon be hired including a Chief Technology Officer, VP of Advanced Technology and VP of Finance and Operations. Amiga will also begin advertising in major newspapers to recruit engineering resources for the new San Jose facility.

Something Is Missing

This sounds like a lot of high powered chiefs coming on board. That's nice, but I am a bit troubled by a lack of any announcement about the one person I think should certainly be included in the ranks of Amiga decision makers, Bill McEwen.

Over the past 18 months, Bill McEwen has been the only Amiga corporate contact for the community. In my opinion, he has done an excellent job of solidifying and maintaining a fractured community, even while being effectively shackled by those calling the shots in the big office.

Mr. McEwen took it upon himself to get involved with the Amiga by getting a system and learning how to use it first hand. I remember him commenting to me on how amazing the Amiga was and I could tell that he was genuine in his belief that the Amiga could play the key

Please Note:

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role in changing the way people think of computing. Bill knows how to deal with the community and understands what needs to be done to again garner the community's support for Amiga. While only a recent Amigan, Bill has been adopted into the community as a true believer.

Right now, McEwen is the only person in the decision making loop of Amiga (barring perhaps Derreck Lisle) that truly has a pulse on the community, and he is singularly responsible for giving many Amigans the needed hope to continue using this platform. If Amiga doesn't bring him on board as a permanent fixture of the company, they are making a big mistake, and I will personally loose several levels of respect for Amiga management.

A Great Idea

There is one thing mentioned by Jim Collas that really struck me as a great idea. During a meeting with user group representatives, it was suggested that Amiga was considering publishing a monthly newsletter for the 400+ world-wide Amiga user groups. I love this idea.

An official newsletter would serve Amiga very well, and would become a real asset to all users if done properly. Of course it would promote and highlight all the latest on the Classic OS and hardware and the new AmigaSoft Operating Environment. But if done correctly, it could also be used as a

platform, and that they are serious about getting the community involved in the future. By doing this, Amiga gains a big self-promoting evangelical army to proselytize the future Amiga. A big reward for a small investment.

I think we all now have good reasons for feeling a little better about the

I think we all now have good reasons for feeling a little better about the fate of the Amiga.

valuable resource to centralize critical information for users. It would also be a great tool for Amiga to gather vital demographic information about the community and act as a springboard to launch dealership promotions, community events, and shows.

This newsletter could easily be coordinated with the Amiga.com website ensuring that it is widely available to all users, internet connected or not. Above all else, an official Amiga newsletter would indicate to all users that Amiga respects them and their dedication to the

fate of the Amiga. After years of frustration and aggravation over the sad plight of our beloved Amiga, I'm finally starting to feel encouraged. The pessimist in me warns that we still have nothing but words from Amiga, so don't feel good yet. But the optimist in me is starting to tap his foot in anticipation of a dance of joy for the future and what it promises to hold.

•AC•

Please Write to:
Fletcher Haug
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An Open Letter to the Community, Jim Collas, Amiga President, April 1999

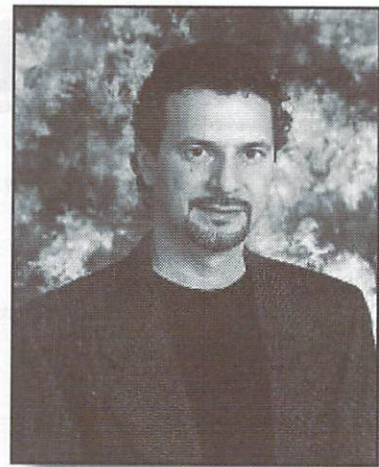


photo courtesy of Amiga.com

This is my first open letter to the Amiga community. In many ways, I am honored by the opportunity to address such a great community of people and represent such a unique brand as Amiga. There are many remarkable Amigans, both former and current, that are responsible for Amiga's impressive products and its spirit of revolutionary innovation. These are the people that created the Amiga phenomena and the people that persevered through these tough times. Amiga communities from across the world have kept the Amiga spirit alive. I can't claim any responsibility for the early success of Amiga or the current endurance. I can only praise the people responsible and hope that I can help bring a new era of greatness to Amiga and fulfill the hopes of the Amiga community.

The St. Louis show a few weeks ago was the first Amiga show I attended as president of Amiga. From the feedback I have received, the show was a great success. The show was well organized with good attendance and was also a lot of fun. The number of people who attended was approximately 1,200 but more important is the fact that there was a 14% increase in attendance from last year. I made my debut as president of Amiga and I want to thank everyone who welcomed me to the community. I especially want to thank those who welcomed me until 3:00 a.m. in the morning and taught me that Amigans really know how to have fun. You know who you are.

significant internal restructuring to strengthen its core business for the future. The intentions relative to Amiga were good but the situation was mismanaged. Some people have told me that I should stop talking about past mistakes and only look toward the future. I agree with this but I also want people to clearly understand that I realize how much our past mistakes have hurt the community and delayed progress. This is important because I do not want to repeat these mistakes so be patient as I discuss this one last time.

In my opinion, the biggest mistake was the decision not to evolve the current Amiga architecture as we developed the next generation. This hurt the current Amiga community the most. The right decision would have been to overlap product generations just as Apple did during the Apple II to Macintosh transition. Apple evolved the Apple II architecture by introducing the Apple III even after Apple came out with the Mac. The Apple III wasn't a big seller but it helped Apple II hardware and software companies and allowed them time to transition their products to the new Mac platform.

Unfortunately, some of the difficulties the Amiga community has endured in the last two years stem from some misguided decisions made by Amiga Inc. It is now obvious to me that some very big mistakes were made in defining a path for Amiga in the last two years.

In St. Louis, I had the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time with people in the Amiga community. Several times during the show, I publicly made the statement that the Amiga community is the greatest community in the computer industry. I am now more convinced of this than ever. The Amiga community is the most innovative, dedicated, heroic and enduring community in the computer industry. I am amazed at what the community has done with little or no support from a corporate entity. You have endured through extremely tough times and kept the spirit of Amiga alive and strong.

Unfortunately, some of the difficulties the Amiga community has endured in the last two years stem from some misguided decisions made by Amiga Inc. It is now obvious to me that some very big mistakes were made in defining a path for Amiga in the last two years. The low priority and support given to Amiga by our parent company, Gateway, aggravated this situation. Gateway was preoccupied during this period with

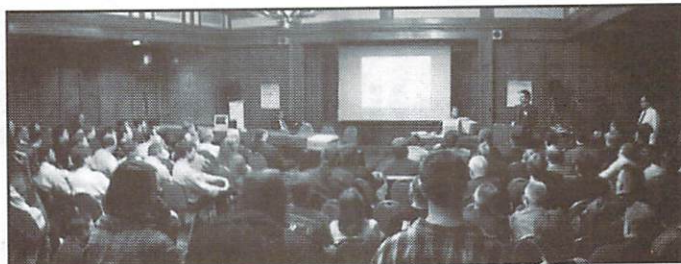
In hindsight and from the vantage of the Amiga community, not evolving the current architecture may look like an incredibly stupid mistake but it was not as obvious to people coming from the PC industry. I am not trying to justify this flawed decision but to give some insight as to how such a decision could be made. Living in a computer industry dominated by Wintel PCs skewed the thinking of people making this decision. In a computer industry dominated by Wintel PCs, computers are obsolete within six to twelve months. The inefficiency of the architecture requires a continuous upgrading of CPUs, graphics, and storage devices in order to deliver acceptable improvements in features and functions. This is what happens in an industry where revolutionary innovation has been replaced by constrained evolution. From this PC centric view, no one could imagine that a computer architecture that stopped evolving in the early '90s could have any life left in it. Obviously this view was very limited and flawed as the Amiga community has proven over-and-over again how much life was left in the current Amiga architecture.

It is obvious that the community would currently be stronger if we had made the decision two years ago to evolve the current Amiga architecture. Two years have now passed and we are faced with a tough question. Is there still life left in the current architecture? I believe that there is. The release of O/S 3.5 in late July or early August will allow the current architecture to live on for a few more years. In addition to O/S 3.5 we are looking at supporting companies that are looking at hardware enhancements to the current architecture. We will also support emulation of the current Amiga architecture on the next generation Amiga so that people can use most of their old software. I am spending time with key people in the Amiga community to finalize transition plans between the current Amiga and the next generation.

Now, it's time to talk about the future! I know this has been an extremely difficult and painful period for the Amiga community but I would like to put that chapter of the Amiga story behind us and look toward the future. We have a difficult road ahead of us with many important decisions to be made on our future plans. I will not make the mistake again of not understanding the Amiga community, its requirements, and its dynamics. St Louis was a good start for me but I require even more input to better understand the situation. As all of you know, the Amiga community is very strong in Europe with many Amiga companies and extremely impressive individuals. I am planning a trip to Germany and the U.K. in late April to meet with more leaders in the Amiga community. The objective of my trip is partially to communicate our current thinking but mostly to listen and understand. I want to understand the opinions of prominent people in the Amiga community. I will use this input to finalize our future architecture and plans. I especially need help in planning out how we will transition from the old architecture to the new architecture in such a way that keeps the Amiga community healthy.

One thing clearly requested by the Amiga community was BETTER COMMUNICATION on the activities at Amiga. I promise to improve our communication starting with this letter and continuing with frequent postings on our Web site as well as increased interaction with the community. Our participation in the St. Louis show and my upcoming trip to Germany and the U.K. are good examples of our efforts in this area. The letter you are currently reading is posted on our Web site in the new "Executive Update" section that I will personally be updating on a monthly basis. In this section you will also find an update on major activities listed after the monthly letter to the community. I think this is a good start and we will continue improving our communication as we go forward. If you have any input on my executive update web page or on how to improve our communication please send your suggestions via email to executive@amiga.com. You can also send email to me directly at jim.collas@amiga.com but I get significant amounts of email so it may take me a few days to respond. The executive@amiga.com email address goes to my assistant who in turn directs the email to the Amiga executive that can most effectively reply.

I know that I have yet to prove my dedication or win your confidence but I hope to do so over the coming months. As many of you already know, I stepped out of a senior executive position with Gateway that was a very prominent position in the PC industry to lead Amiga. I did this because I believe strongly in what Amiga stands for. I believe in the Amiga spirit of revolutionary innovation. I believe that the PC revolution is over because innovative revolution has been replaced by constrained evolution. I believe that there is a new computer revolution on the horizon, one that will fulfill the promise of



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Tape 1 is a 2-Hour Video of

Friday, March 11, 1999 with:

Opening Remark, Amiga OS 3.5 Demonstration by Haage & Partner, Jim Collas' First Speech March 11, 1999

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bringing the power of computing to the masses. Most importantly, I believe that Amiga will play a significant role in this new computer revolution. But Amiga can't do this without the full support of the Amiga community. The Amiga community is one of the greatest and most innovative communities in the computer industry. It is a revolutionary army waiting to strike and reclaim its prominent position in the computer industry. I truly believe this from the depths of my heart and I promise to use all of my experience, resources, industry contacts, and energy to give Amiga a strong and aggressive push. I hope I will not let you down.

Let's keep the momentum going as we come back for the future.

Sincerely, Jim Collas
President, Amiga

•AC•

Fantastic Dreams

Motion Studios has a new program for the Amiga that out does Super Goo for Mac and Windows.

by Bill Panagouleas

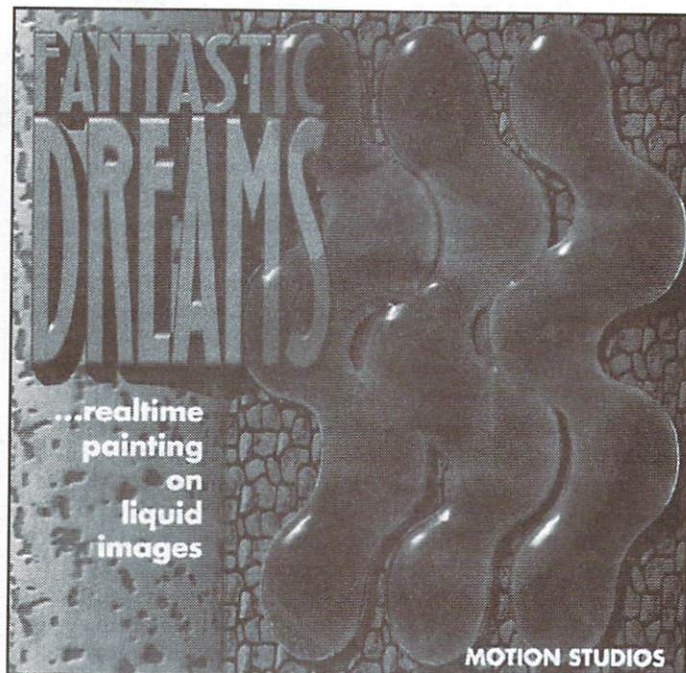
Fantastic Dreams could be considered the heir apparent of the very popular classic Amiga program Elastic Dreams. Fantastic Dreams is a real-time morphing and WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) image manipulation program from Motion Studios in Germany. It is available in the USA from Software Hut (www.softhut.com). In addition, there is a demo version available on Aminet.

Fantastic Dreams is not an Image processor like ImageFX 3.2. It is, instead, very similar to Super Goo. Super Goo is a

software package for Mac OS & Windows from Metacreations. Metacreations software does not follow any apparent style guide interface rules. Instead, big lavish colorful interfaces, 24-bit sliders & gadgets, fully rendered and textured graphic buttons give a look and feel as if you are seeing a piece of future software. Unfortunately, none of Metacreations' software is available for the Amiga even with its history of innovative graphics and video applications. However, this has created opportunities for other designers on the Amiga.

Super Goo is one of the best known Metacreations products. It allows you to manipulate images in real-time. You can morph, smear, stretch, twist images very quickly. Many husbands have angered their wives by stretching the noses & ears of their partners scanned image with Super Goo. Not a good idea to try at home but fun nevertheless.

Obviously Super Goo is a cool program that we don't have on the Amiga but that no longer matters. We now have something better, Fantastic Dreams from Motion Studios. This new



Files To Morph

Among the variety of tools and files on the Fantastic Dreams CD are pictures to morph from one to the other. Although some probably will not look very different before and after.





Fantastic Dreams' Funroom lets users experiment with their images by applying a new nose, glasses, or even change a hairstyle.

Amiga company has created a better, more powerful and feature rich program similar to Super Goo. The beautiful futuristic interface is there as is the 24-bit sliders and gadgets.

Is Fantastic Dreams Amiga style guide compliant? Of course not, but you won't mind this time. Fantastic Dreams begins where Super Goo left off. For example, in Fantastic Dreams the backgrounds can be changed, and many different versions are supplied. Also it has a new Funroom feature that was not present in Elastic Dreams. With Funroom you can change the noises, eyes, ears etc. on your image. For example you could even scan in your own image and give yourself a rad new virtual hairstyle.

Fantastic Dreams glorious 24-bit futuristic interface has been enhanced over the one in Elastic Dreams. The

application will even work on a low end 8MB 68030 A1200 but, its obvious that it was designed for high end Amigas.

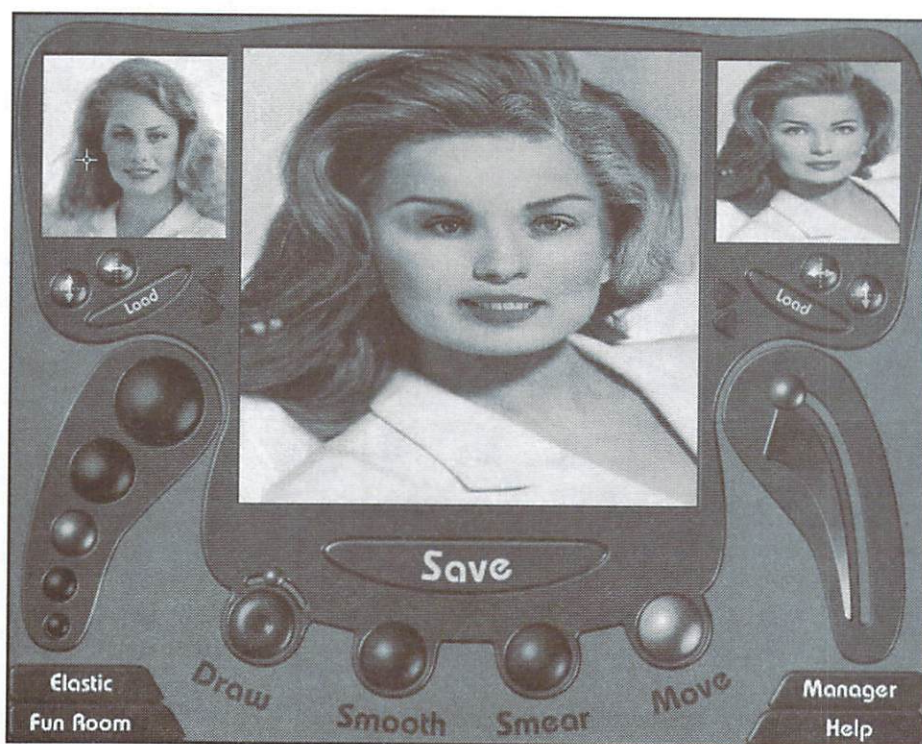
If your Amiga does have a PowerPC card you will enjoy the real-time feedback this software gives you. You will think

Fantastic Dreams has extensive support for modern powerful Amiga add-ons like graphics cards and PowerPC accelerators.

Fantastic Dreams has extensive support for modern powerful Amiga add-ons like graphics cards and PowerPC accelerators. It has now been optimized for PowerPC so Amiga users with PPC cards will get the most benefit from this software tool. Now that Amiga Inc. has sanctioned 24-bit graphics and PowerPC for Amiga OS 3.5, Fantastic Dreams is one of the few programs that already supports these modern features.

someone stole your Amiga and replaced it with an SGI. It is very responsive on 060 and 040 based Amiga machines as well, however, this product really shows off the speed of Motorola's PowerPC chip.

Fantastic Dreams comes on a CD-ROM and installs with the standard Commodore installer. Fantastic Dreams requires at least a 68030 CPU, 8MB of



Fantastic Dreams' Composer section lets users combine two images by mixing two pictures together.

Fast RAM and 20MB of free Hard drive storage. An 060 and/or PowerPC with 32MB of Fast RAM is recommend.

Fantastic Dreams ships with no printed documentation so that may bother users who like to have a printed

manual. It does have an AmigaGuide based manual with instructions on installing and using the software.

Fantastic Dreams has three different screens in addition to the Funroom which was already discussed, Elastic, Composer

& Manager. Elastic is where you do most of your image manipulation. You have various tools for smearing, wiping, mirroring & moving the image. You select one of the brush sizes (there are five preset sizes), then, wherever you move your brush and press the left mouse button, you change the image. There are additional tools on the right for complex changes like whirl, rotate, twist, stretch, jitters etc. These tools affect the entire image and are very slow without a PowerPC. Once you make your change and stamp it down on the filmstrip, on the same screen you can set the number of frames and watch a real-time animation of your effect.

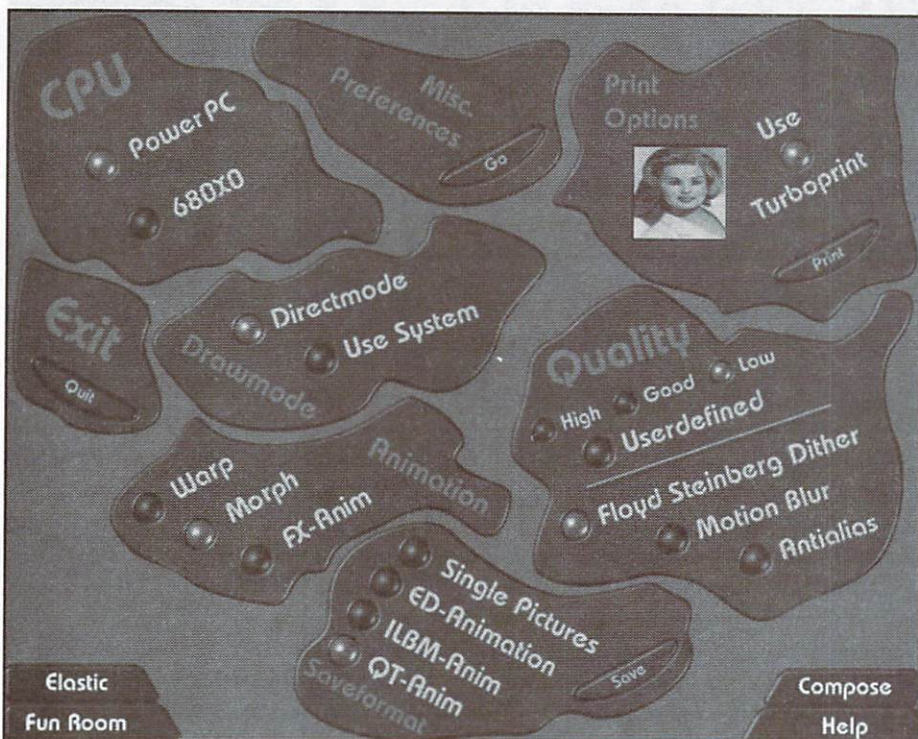
Composer is the section of Fantastic Dreams that allows you to combine two images. With Composer and the supplied tools on this screen you easily mix pictures together by rubbing though one layer on top of another image. You see small previews of both images one on the left and one on the right. A large screen in the middle shows you the composited mixer of the two.

Some very interesting examples of using composer are included on the Fantastic Dreams CD-ROM. Many images are on the CD that you can experiment with or scan in your own. Fantastic Dreams directly supports ScanQuik if you own that product.

The Manager screen of Fantastic Dreams allows you to configure the program to your personal tastes. Resolution settings, anim5, Quicktime or single image saving, motion blur, antialiasing are all turned on or off on this screen. You can also select from the various cool backgrounds for the foreground and background textures.

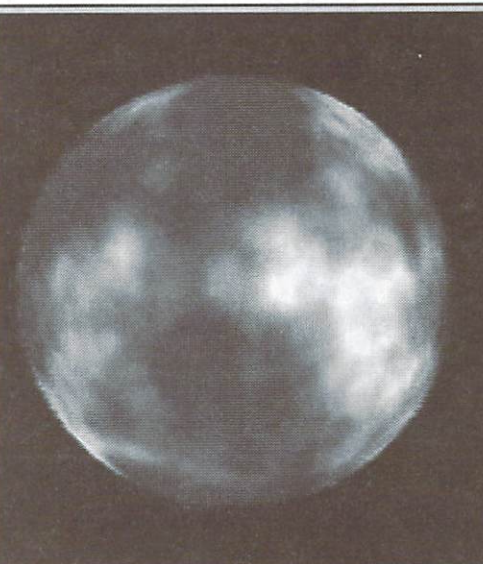
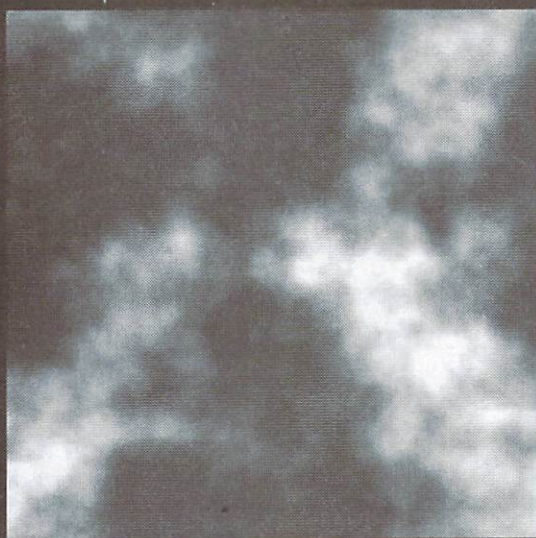
Conclusion

I really enjoyed using Fantastic Dreams and recommend it highly. It is easy to use and fast. Anyone's grandmother could learn to use the program very quickly. It would be nice to have a printed manual with more tutorials and a better English translation but these are minor points. Fantastic Dreams is a great update to what Elastic Dreams was. I can't wait to see what Motion Studios dreams up for the next version. They set out to create a better version of Super Goo for the Amiga and were successful. •AC•



Fantastic Dreams utilizes a different mind set in creating the interface tools for the software. However, once you get used to the idea of the user interface, it can be fun.

Build Your Own Planet



Take one flat sky (upper left) and transform it into a world (upper right) with one command. It looks pretty good in an appropriate background (bottom).

Three steps to creating your own world.

by Nick Cook

Ever need to create your own planet? Perhaps you want to use a space theme for a layout, but you don't want to sift through NASA photos or have a great deal of time. Here's a quick and easy way to make a planet with ImageFX 3 in just three steps. You don't even have to draw!

STEP ONE: Use the Buffer > New command to make a 200 by 200 buffer.

STEP TWO: Select Clouds from the Hook requester. Set the Painting style to Blue Sky, then render (Figure 1, top left).

STEP THREE: Go to the Spherize panel (located under Distort). Uncheck the Hotspot option and leave everything else alone. Select OK, and you've got an instant planet (Figure 1, top right).

What could be simpler? Now just plop your planet onto a suitable background and your work is done. Experimenting with the different Painting styles available with the Clouds hook can change the planet from very Earth-like to very alien.

•AC•



Digital Photos

Creating Digital Photographs and Slides Without a Scanner

by Michael Tobin, M.D., Ph.D.

The ability to import images into a computer has a variety of uses. Images already in a digital format present little problem, provided the appropriate software is available to interpret the image file structure. Non-digital images, such as photographs and slides, must first be converted to digital format. I have developed four methods of making digital images:

- (1) Seattle FilmWorks
- (2) Kodak PhotoCD
- (3) Olympus D-600L digital camera
- (4) Canon Xapshot camera

Seattle FilmWorks

One of the more intriguing options for digital photography is provided by Seattle FilmWorks, who not only develop film into prints and slides but can also convert these pictures into digital format

and distribute them on floppy disks, CD-ROM, or via the Internet. Initially, Seattle sends two rolls of film and assigns you a customer number that you affix to each roll of film when you send it back in the postage-free mailer.

I had previously reviewed Seattle FilmWorks (<http://www.octet.com/~mikety/Projects/photocd8.html>) around 1996, at which time photos were distributed exclusively on floppy disks and were highly compressed. I concluded that, while convenient and acceptable for some purposes, image quality was limited. Also, Amiga users had no way of viewing the images directly because they were stored in Seattle FilmWorks' proprietary SFW format. I was most interested to find out if the situation had changed.

Seattle's CD-ROM

Seattle FilmWorks can send your digital images on a floppy disk if you wish, but they now provide the option of CD-ROM storage at no extra charge. Photos are still stored in Seattle's proprietary SFW format. Seattle FilmWorks does not supply software needed by the Amiga to read these images. However, Andreas Kleinert has ported a UNIX program to the Amiga written by Everett Lipman that can convert SFW files to JPEG format. This program, `sfwjpg`, can be found on Aminet (<http://ftp.wustl.edu/~aminet/gfx/conv/sfwjpg.lha>). Once in JPEG



Figure 2: Photo captured with an Olympus OM-4 35 mm. camera and then developed, digitized, and distributed on CD-ROM by Seattle FilmWorks. Image quality is excellent.

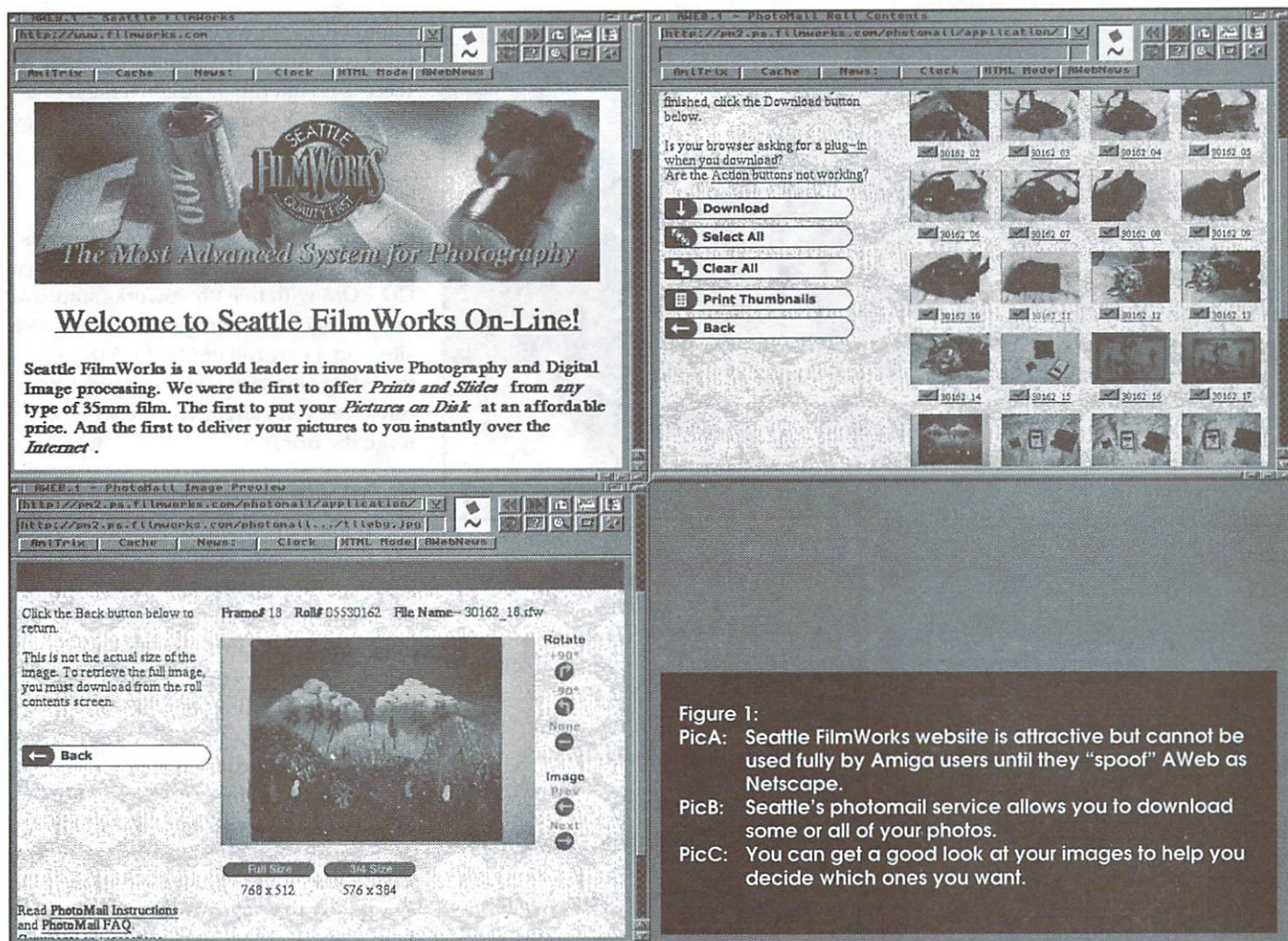


Figure 1:

PicA: Seattle FilmWorks website is attractive but cannot be used fully by Amiga users until they "spoo" AWeb as Netscape.

PicB: Seattle's photomail service allows you to download some or all of your photos.

PicC: You can get a good look at your images to help you decide which ones you want.

format, photos can be loaded into almost any Amiga image processing or viewing program.

You will find that your images are flipped vertically. Although programs like ADPro and ImageFX can quickly correct this, flipjpeg is included in the sfwjpg.lha archive to perform a lossless, vertical inversion prior to viewing.

Although I found sfwjpg flawless, Everett cautions, "As far as I am aware, Seattle FilmWorks does not make public the specifications of these formats. The format specifications were deduced by examining a number of .sfw and .pwp files, and may not be entirely accurate. In particular, some .sfw files which were downloaded from the SFW web site were not properly converted to JFIF."

Seattle's Website

Seattle FilmWorks' customers can receive their photos before their CD-

ROM arrives by visiting Seattle's website (<http://www.filmworks.com>) where they can view and download their pictures. To do this, they need their customer and film roll numbers.

as" option in Networks Settings. Seattle's website will now be tricked into letting you use AWeb to preview your photos before downloading some or all of them (Figure 1).

Seattle FilmWorks' customers can receive their photos before their CD-ROM arrives by visiting Seattle's website

If Seattle's website detects your use of a browser other than Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer, it will allow you to download your entire roll of film but will not let you view your photos or download individual images. The way to circumvent this is to make your Amiga browser masquerade ("spoo") as Netscape (i.e., Mozilla). If you use AWeb, the process is as easy as using the "Spoo

Although you can patch IBrowse so that it spoofs as Netscape, AWeb is still a better choice when visiting Seattle FilmWorks' website because AWeb has a Javascript interpreter, which is needed to take advantage of Seattle's photomail options, whereas IBrowse does not.

Seattle FilmWorks places one more obstacle before Amigans can view their downloaded pictures. Photos are not sent



Olympus Cameras

Figure 3 (Top): The Olympus D-600L digital megapixel camera capable of 1280x1024 resolution.

Figure 4 (Bottom): The Canon Xapshot, one of the first affordable cameras to capture images onto a disk.



as individual SFW files but rather, are combined first into a single, proprietary, PWP archive. However, thanks to Lipman and Kleinert, individual images can be extracted from the PWP archive and converted transparently to JPEG files by using `pwpjpg`, which is included in `sfwjpg.lha`.

Seattle Image Quality and Other Issues

I found the quality of the Amiga-converted images to be excellent (Figure 2). Images have 768x512 pixel resolution and 24-bit color depth and appear identical to those generated on the PC using Seattle FilmWorks' own Photoworks software. Surprisingly,

Photoworks allows you to save SFW images in Amiga IFF format. Because there is no intermediate conversion to a JPEG file, IFF images thus produced may be superior for detailed applications.

Seattle FilmWorks is a very cost-effective choice. For a 24-exposure roll, you can get slides and a set of 4x6 prints and an index picture, and all images on a CD-ROM with free Photoworks software, and one month's storage on Seattle's web site, and a new roll of film for \$18.35, including standard USPS shipping! You can save even more if you are willing to forgo the prints.

The Kodak PhotoCD

If you have slides or negatives that you want to digitize, you can have them scanned at a professional photo lab and then put onto a Kodak PhotoCD. While not every photo lab offers this service, Kodak has information on its website (<http://www.kodak.com/US/en/digital/products/photoCD.shtml>) to help you locate a local facility.

Users of Asimwares' AsimCDFS CD-ROM file system will have no trouble viewing PhotoCD images. On a standard Kodak PhotoCD, each slide or negative is scanned at 192x128, 384x256, 768x512, 1536x1024, and 3072x2048 resolutions. If you opt for a Pro PhotoCD, you can also have a 4096x6144 image, at additional cost.

The detail provided by a Kodak PhotoCD image (3072x2048 pixel resolution and almost 19MB in size) far surpasses that of Seattle FilmWorks (768x512 pixel resolution, compressed 10:1 and, when converted to a 24-bit IFF file, approximately 1MB in size).

The higher resolution images provided by Kodak PhotoCDs are not inexpensive. First, you must purchase a PhotoCD master disk, unless you have space on one you already own. Using my local photolab as an example, the total cost for a master disk (\$10.95), 24 slides at \$2.25/slide, and an index picture at \$5.95 is \$70.90.

The Olympus D-600L Digital Camera

If you use a digital camera, your photos are already digital and the only issue is how to get them into an Amiga computer. Although there is software on

Genesis

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Aminet that supports serial transfer from selected Kodak digital cameras to an Amiga, it is Andreas Gunther and Versalia Computer who provide Amiga software for a wide variety of digital cameras. This software is available from Eyetech (<http://www.eyetech.co.uk/PRODUCT/PAMDC/DIGITALC.HTM>). I have used Versalia's CamControl software successfully to transfer digital images from the Olympus D-600L (Figure 3) to the serial port of my Amiga 1200 computer.

Digital camera images are immediately viewable and the quality can be impressive. The pixel resolution of the Olympus D-600L is 1280x1024 with three different levels of compression. Less compression means more image quality but a larger file and fewer images that can be stored on the removable disk.

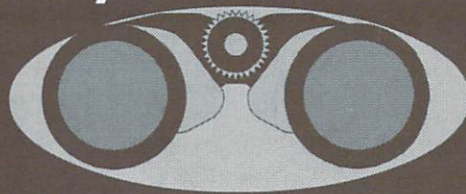
The initial outlay for digital camera imaging can range from a few hundred dollars to well over one thousand. For this, you get to see your images immediately, with a quality, at the high end, that rivals 35 mm film. Many digital cameras

allow output directly to television or to thermal printers. All allow images to be transferred to a computer for further processing.

The Canon Xapshot

Before the advent of digital photography, analog still video cameras made by Canon were capable of storing 50 individually erasable images on 2-inch

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removable video disks. Images were viewed by connecting the camera's video output to a television's video input via an AC coupling device. One of the more popular Canon models was the Xapshot (Figure 4).

As with any NTSC video image, Xapshot photos can be digitized and

imported into an Amiga by connecting the camera's video output to a frame capture device, such as the GVP IV24 video board. Images, while adequate for some applications, are not of the same quality as those produced by modern digital cameras.

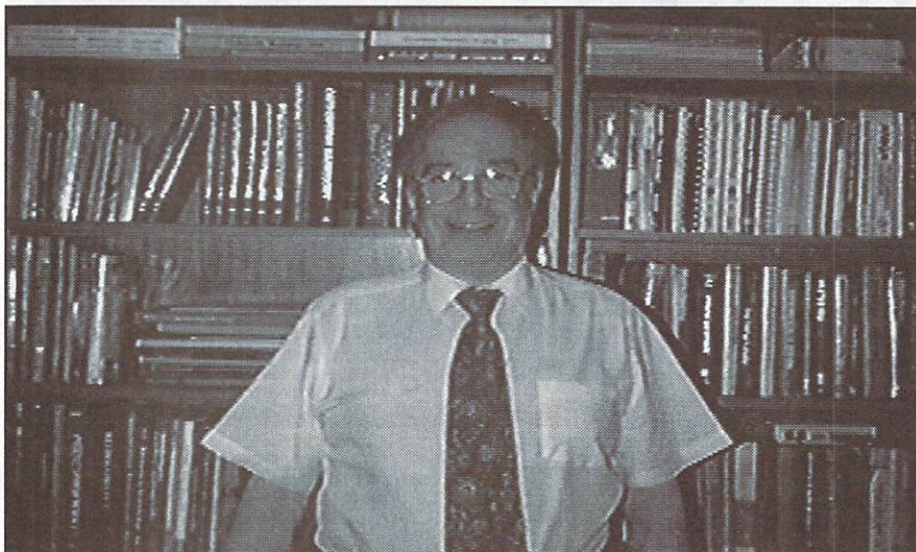


Figure 5: Photo of the author taken with the Canon Xapshot. Scan lines are visible.

Recommendations

If you have a digital camera, by all means use it. They are great fun and can produce excellent images especially if you own one of the newer megapixel models. Digital cameras are especially appealing now that software exists to help interface them with the Amiga.

If you own a Canon Xapshot camera, you can continue to enjoy it by purchasing rechargeable BP-4P batteries from Pictech, Inc., who are located in Toronto, Canada (telephone: 416-961-5970, email: imaging@pictech.com). Your level of satisfaction with Xapshot's images will depend on your intended use.

If you don't own a digital camera, I can recommend Seattle FilmWorks to process your 35mm. film into digital images, especially now that Amiga decoding software is available. Not only are the prices very reasonable, but the images sent on CD-ROM are of higher quality than those previously available only on floppy disk. This is because they are much less compressed (10:1 vs. 30:1). In addition, Seattle FilmWorks can scan already developed slides and prints onto a CD-ROM.

Prior to receiving their CD-ROMS, Amiga users can view and download their photos from Seattle's website by spoofing AWeb as Mozilla. Finally, Seattle's telephone support line is excellent, with knowledgeable and helpful staff, and only a minimal wait for service.

Amigans will find Seattle's 768x512 resolution suitable for many purposes, including Internet and video projects. For applications requiring higher resolution digital images, the corresponding slides can be taken to a local photo lab for scanning onto a Kodak PhotoCD.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Wendell Watanabe, Mike Leavitt, and Keith B. Noble for their suggestions on spoofing with AWeb and to Stephen Leibowitz and Linda E. Ketchum for reviewing this article.

•AC•

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This Old Workbench: Episode 27 Season Finale

This long running AC series ends with a few news bits and the hope of a spin-off.

By Dave Matthews

First off, I am putting This Old Workbench on hiatus for a while. When I started this column, in the May 1996 issue of *Amazing Computing*, I had no real thought that I would still be writing about the 'classic' Amiga Workbench in 1999. As the final days of this millennium wind down, I find myself hard pressed to find fresh ground to cover as far as enhancing the Amiga's OS.

Don't get me wrong, I still love the Amiga's OS, and I still hope to write more articles in the future, but I can't feel I'm doing the Amiga, *Amazing Computing* or its readers any service by rehashing material I've covered before, and over the last three years, I've covered quite a lot of ground. So, although This Old Workbench won't be a regular series, as events warrant, I will write new episodes. Also, I'll probably extend "This Old Workbench" to "This Old Amiga", and broaden the coverage to include Amiga enhancements beyond the Workbench.

As always, your feedback is important to me, so if there is anything Amiga Enhancement-wise you'd like to see, let me know, and I'll cover it if possible.

Aminet Home Moves

You may have experienced some difficulty reaching Aminet if you used the Washington University archive at: <http://ftp.wustl.edu/~aminet/>

Apparently, WUarchive had one too many crashes, and Urban Mueller has decided to move the main Aminet archive to a server in Germany. However, the WUarchive site will continue to be an Aminet mirror and is now back online.

NewIcons v4.5

Well, there's been some news on the NewIcons front, unfortunately, not all of it good. Version 4.5 of NewIcons is a maintenance release, and it may be the last version we see for a while. To quote from the Official NewIcons Web site:

"Now the bad news. If you haven't heard already, Eric Sauvageau, our programmer, has ceased further development of NewIcons. While he still has his A1200, he is now spending most of his time on his new PC. Unfortunately, this is the second time I've had to announce the loss of our main coder to another platform (Nicola left the project after version 2). Eric has been kind enough to do one last version to optimize things further and fix some minor bugs."

Philip Vedovatti, the AESIcons guy, is still involved with NewIcons, so all hope is not lost. Check them out at: <http://www.amiganet.org/NewIcons/>

Visual Prefs 1.5 Beta

For the adventurous out there, Visual Prefs 1.5 is available for public beta testing. Note that programs being beta tested are not yet finished, usually have some missing functionality from the finished product, and may contain bugs. If you aren't comfortable taking a chance with new, possibly buggy software, don't download this. If you haven't tried Visual Prefs yet, you might want to start with the officially released version 1.4:

<http://ftp.wustl.edu/pub/aminet/util/wb/VisualPrefs.lha>

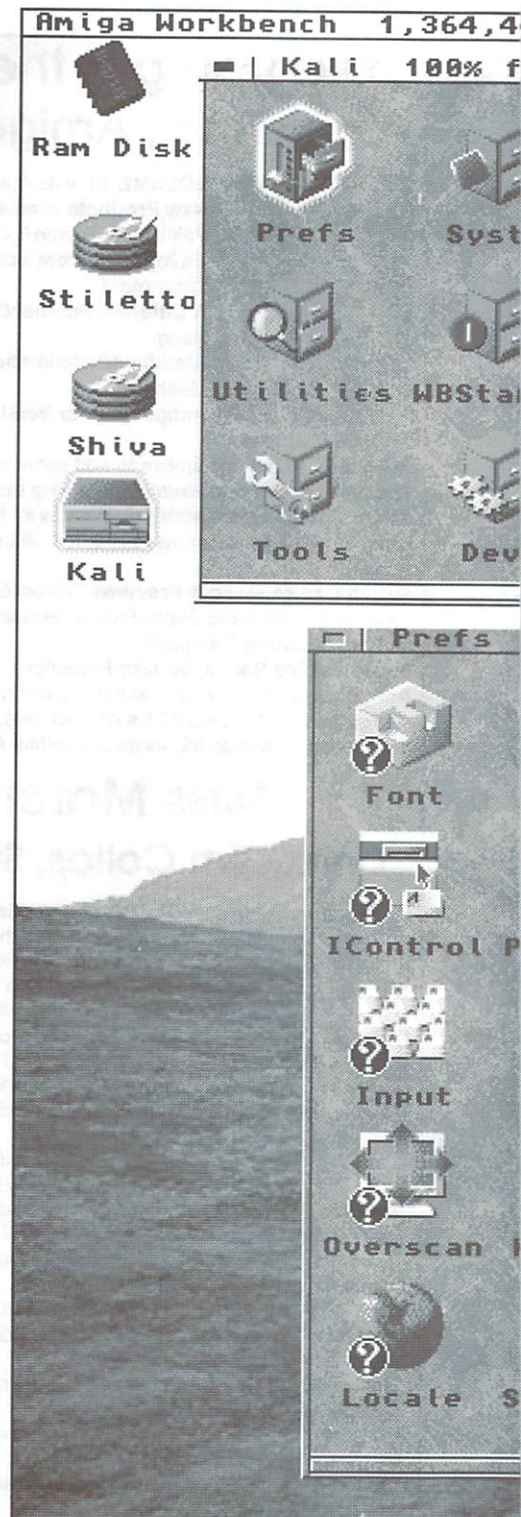
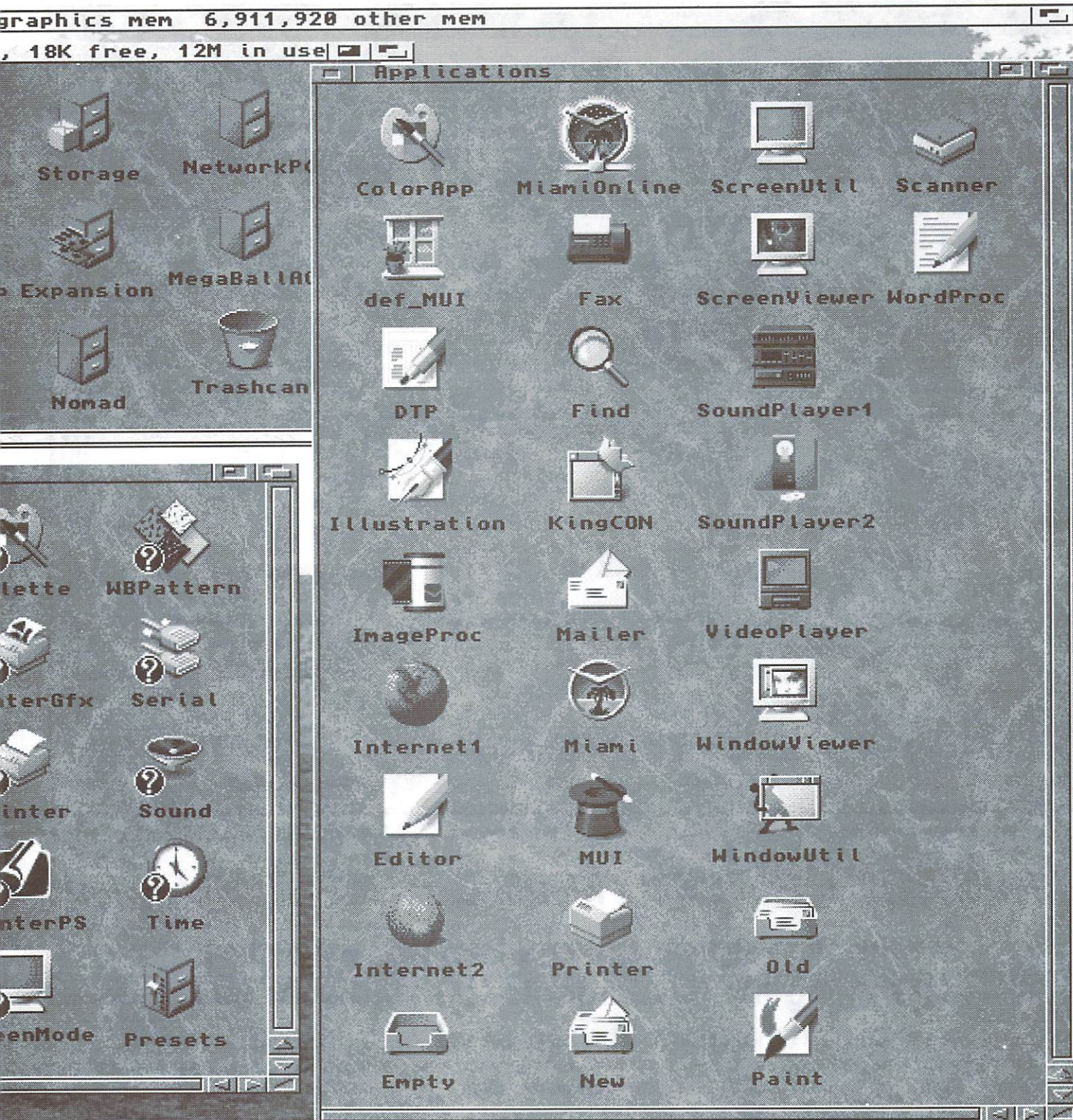


Figure 1.

Aside from bug fixes and such, one of the really neat things in the 1.5 beta version is experimental support for bitmap images for the gadgets (see Figure 1). You can download Massimo Tantignone's beta at: <http://home.intercom.it/~amigaws/Eng/Projects.html>



AmigaOS 3.5 Preview to Use GlowIcons

As you know (at least if you've read the April 1999 issue of *Amazing!*) Workbench 3.5 is going to use NewIcons, specifically, Matt Chaput's very nicely done GlowIcons. You can find out more about AmigaOS 3.5 at Amiga Inc.'s web

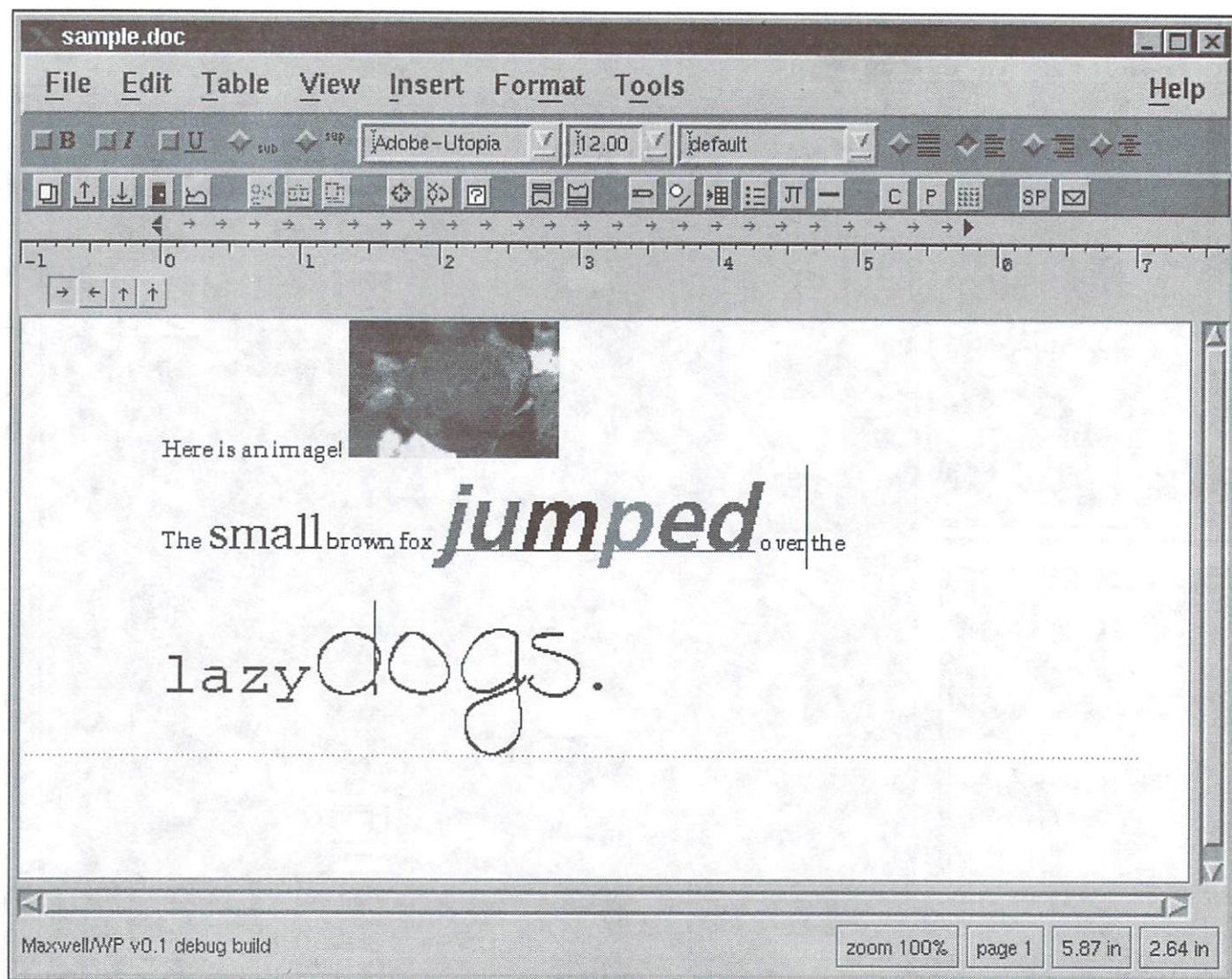
site (www.amiga.com) and try out the first release of GlowIcons for a preview at Matt Chaput's site (http://reality.sgi.com/mchaput_aw/).

As always, you can reach me at dsmatthews@geocities.com. Also, look for "This Old Workbench" episodes in

syndication at my website:
<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Hills/2359/>

•AC•

Please Write to:
Dave Matthews
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Fall River, MA 02720



Maxwell is another very good free word processor for Unix like OSs.

Shell Programming Part Three.

To realize significant shell scripts, we'll start examining the fundamental and indispensable programming "if then else" statement.

by Antonello De Santis

The shell scripts we examined in the last article have a linear structure. What does this mean? It means that when you run them, the shell interpreter executes every instruction in the script, from the first to the last one.

When you start writing more complex scripts, such a structure is not going to be powerful enough to accomplish the operations you want. You may want the script to behave in one way when some conditions are verified and do different actions when other conditions are verified.

For example, you may be writing a script that displays the content of a text file if it exists, or creates a new file if it doesn't

exist. Such a script would be impossible to write if we could only use a linear structure. In fact, in such scripts every instruction is executed. If instead, in our example we want to execute some instructions if and only if a particular condition is present, we want to execute other instructions. The shell interpreter, as well as every other programming language, provides you with a set of statements called "control structures" allowing you to write non-linear scripts.

One of these structures is the "if then else" statement. Its syntax is quite simple:


```

if [ condition ]
then
    instructions
else
    other instructions
fi

```

When the shell interpreter finds an if then else statement, it first checks the condition (called "guard") to find out if it's true or not. If the condition is true, it executes the instructions after the "then" word until it reaches the "else" word and then jumps to the first instruction after the "fi" word. If the condition is false instead, the interpreter jumps to the first instruction after the "else" word and executes every instruction till "fi", then it goes on executing the script after "fi".

The if condition must be specified between a couple of square brackets, leaving a blank space both after the first bracket [and before the last bracket]. Note that we left a couple of white spaces before the "instructions" to be executed after the if and else words. This is not required by the shell interpreter, but it's preferable to use some white spaces to put in evidence the set of instructions to be executed after an if or else word to make the script's source code more readable.

To realize the above example we should write a "pseudo" script like the following:

```

if [ file exists ]
then
    show file's content
else
    create a new file
fi

```

Let's now see a real script called "firstif" about using the if then else statement.

```

#!/bin/sh
echo -n "Write a number please: "
read a
if [ $a -ge 0 ]
then
    echo "The number you have typed in is greater than or equal to 0"
else
    echo "The number you have typed in is less than 0"
fi

```



Maxwell's search and replace feature.

The output of the script is:

```

$ ./firstif
Write a number please: 5
The number you have typed in is greater than or equal to 0

```

We first ask the user to type in a number and then we store it in variable 'a'. Next we check whether the content of variable 'a' is greater than or equal to 0. This is accomplished using the flag -ge (greater then or equal to).

Assuming that the user has typed in number 5, the guard is true and so the shell interpreter goes on executing the set of instructions after the then word and prints on the standard output "The number you have typed in is greater than or equal to 0".

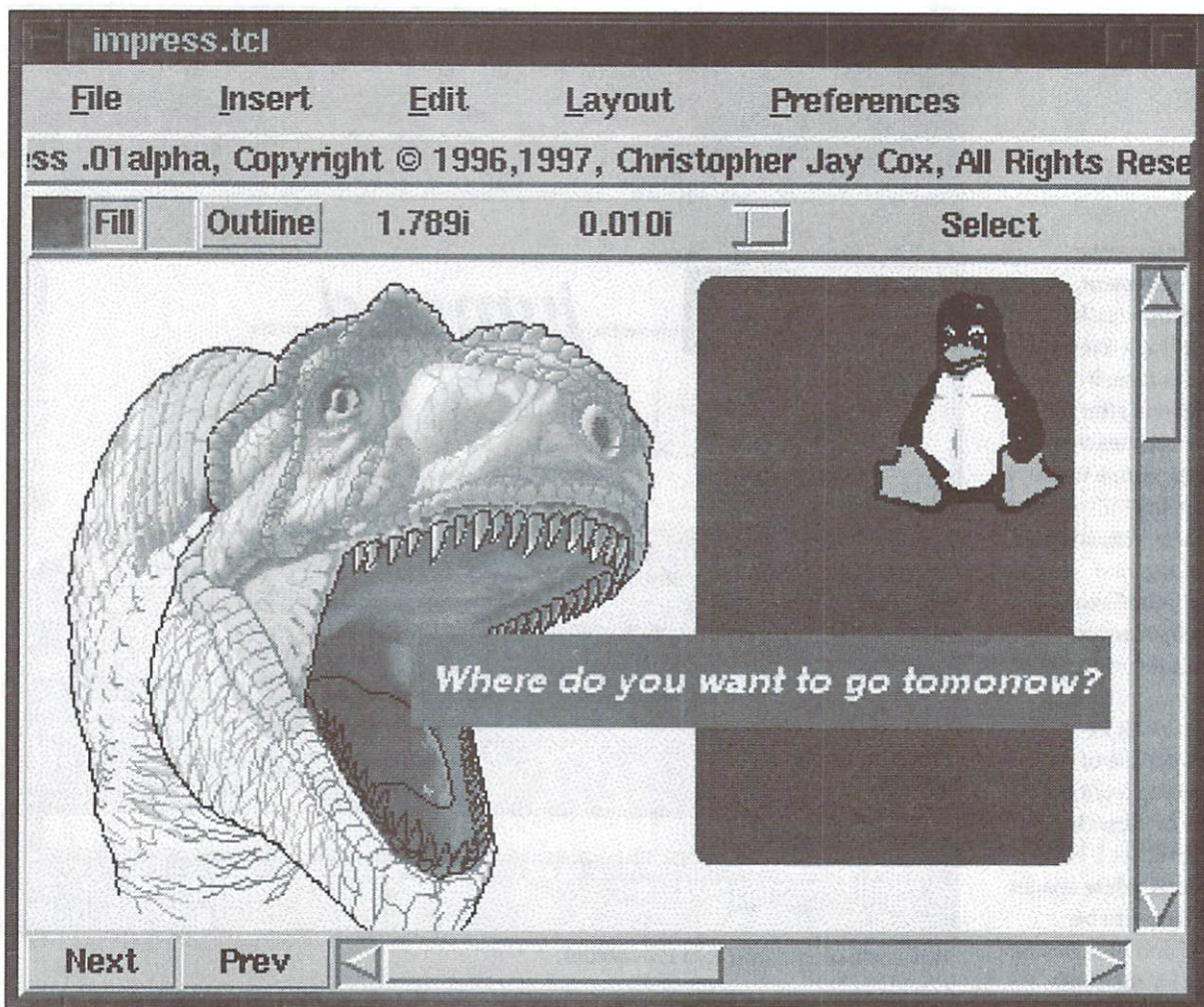
You may be wondering if you always have to specify the else statement. The answer is no. You can, for example, desire to write a script that executes certain instructions if a condition is verified, but don't do anything in particular if that condition is not verified.

The structure you have to follow in such a situation is this:

```

if [ condition ]
then
    instructions
fi

```

ImPress, a nice and user friendly desktop publishing program.

As you can see, you simply don't specify the else statement. Remember to write the `fi` keyword though, because it defines where the set of instructions to be executed ends.

Another variant of the `if then else` statement is the "`if then elif then....else fi`". This is helpful when in a script you don't have to check just one, but several conditions. Let's see a sample script called `secondif`.

```
#!/bin/sh
echo -n "Write a number please: "
read a
if [ $a -ge 0 ]
then
echo "The number you have typed in is greater than 0"
elif [ $a -eq 0 ]
echo "The number you have typed in is equal to 0"
else
echo "The number you have typed in is less than 0"
fi
```

The output is:

```
$ ./secondscript
```

Write a number please: 0

The number you have typed in is equal to 0

The meaning of this script should be clear. We ask the user to write a number and then print out the standard output if the number is greater than, equal to or less than 0. You can specify as many "`elif`" as you want, but always remember that the statement must finish with keyword "`fi`". One more note about the `if then else` statement concerning a syntactical specification. Some programmers prefer to write the "`then`" keyword on the same line as the "`if [condition]`", you can accomplish this by following this scheme:

```
if [ condition ]; then
instructions
else
instructions
fi
```

The only difference respect to the usual `if then else` structure is that you have to write a semicolon ';' after the `[condition]`.

Conditions.

The shell interpreter can check a big set of conditions that you specify on the guard of the if then else statement and of EVERY other control structure we're going to examine in next articles. You are allowed to use conditions made up of string comparison, arithmetic comparison and file conditionals. Check the three boxes in these pages to see every possible flag. Let's see one more example to see how to use file conditionals on the guard of if then else control structure. Let this script be called "fileif".

```
#!/bin/sh
```

```
if [ -e $1 ]
then
  more $1
else
  touch $1
  echo "File $1 has been created"
fi
```

This simple script checks if the file passed as argument exists, if it does then its content is displayed, else a new text file with the name passed as parameter is created. It must be called like this:

```
$ ./fileif ~/.bashrc
.bashrc
content
```

In this case we've launched the script specifying the bash shell configuration file that is in your home directory as parameter. Assuming that such file exists, its content is displayed on the standard output. Now let's call the script in this way:

```
$ ./fileif ~/file.txt
File /your-home-dir-path/file.txt has been created
```

In this case instead, assuming that file.txt doesn't exist, a new empty text file called file.txt is created in your home directory. The condition [-e \$1], tells the shell interpreter to check if the file specified in variable \$1 exists. If it exists its content is displayed using command "more", else a new file named as specified into variable \$1 is created.

Check box 3 to see every file conditional allowed to be used as guard in control structures.

See you next month with other programming control structures!

•AC•

Box 1 - String Comparison

Flag	Result
string	True if the string is not empty
string1 = string2	True if the strings are equal
string1 != string2	True if the strings are not equal
-n string	True if the string is not NULL (not empty)
-z string	True if the string is NULL (empty)

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Box 2 - Arithmetic Comparison

Flag	Result
expr1 -eq expr2	True if expressions are equal
expr1 -ne expr2	True if expressions are not equal
expr1 -gt expr2	True if expr1 is greater than expr2
expr1 -ge expr2	True if expr1 is greater than or equal to expr2
expr1 -lt expr2	True if expr1 is less than expr2
expr1 -le expr2	True if expr1 is less than or equal to expr2
! expr	True if expr is false, false if expr is true

Box 3 - File Conditional

Flag	Result
-d file	True if file is a directory
-e file	True if file exists
-f file	True if file is a regular file
-g file	True if set-group-id is set on file
-r file	True if file is readable
-s file	True if file's size is not 0
-u file	True if set-user-id is set on file
-w file	True if file is writeable
-x file	True if file is executable

MP3 and the Amiga

The Amiga can encode and playback MP3s with surprisingly good quality, as well as play streaming mpeg audio off the Internet.

by Fabian Jimenez

There is a new revolutionary file format that may affect the way you buy and listen to music someday soon. The new file format is called MP3 (mpeg audio 3) and its ability to deliver CD quality audio files that are small enough for PCs to handle have many in the music and computer industries excited, but unsure as to how things will work out. The pundits are arguing over how PCs can benefit from MP3 music, and preserve the rights for the artists who created the music.

While Amigas are not as potent as the latest PCs or Macs, owning an Amiga does not prevent you from participating in this revolution. The Amiga can encode and playback MP3s with surprisingly good quality, as well as play streaming mpeg audio off the Internet.

What's the Deal with MP3?

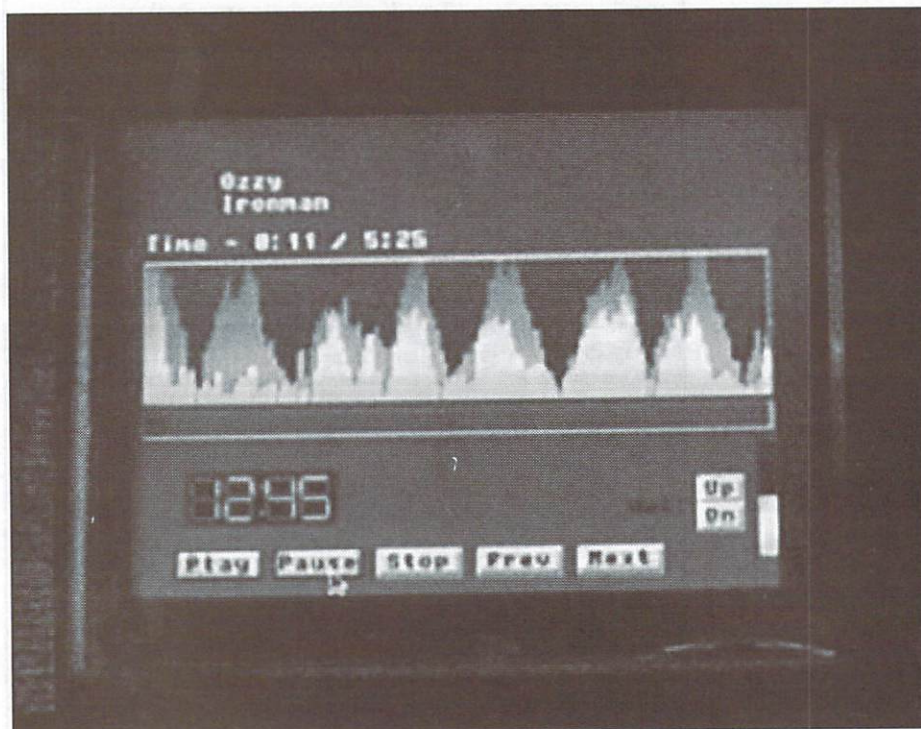
According to the MP3.com FAQ, MP3 is either MPEG-1 (Motion Picture Experts Group) or MPEG-2 audio, layer 3 compression. With the help of an encoder, you can compress very large audio files (usually AIFF format) down to surprisingly small files without the loss of CD audio quality. A typical five minute song can occupy an AIFF file of up to 60 megabytes. Using MP3 compression, you can scale this file down to just about 5 MB, a 12 to 1 ratio. A typical music CD stores up to 74 minutes of music, about 15 to 20 titles. A CD containing MP3 files can store up to 10 hours of music, easily around 200 songs or 10 uncompressed audio CDs.

Obviously, one might wonder with MP3's advantage, why isn't it making great inroads into the music industry?

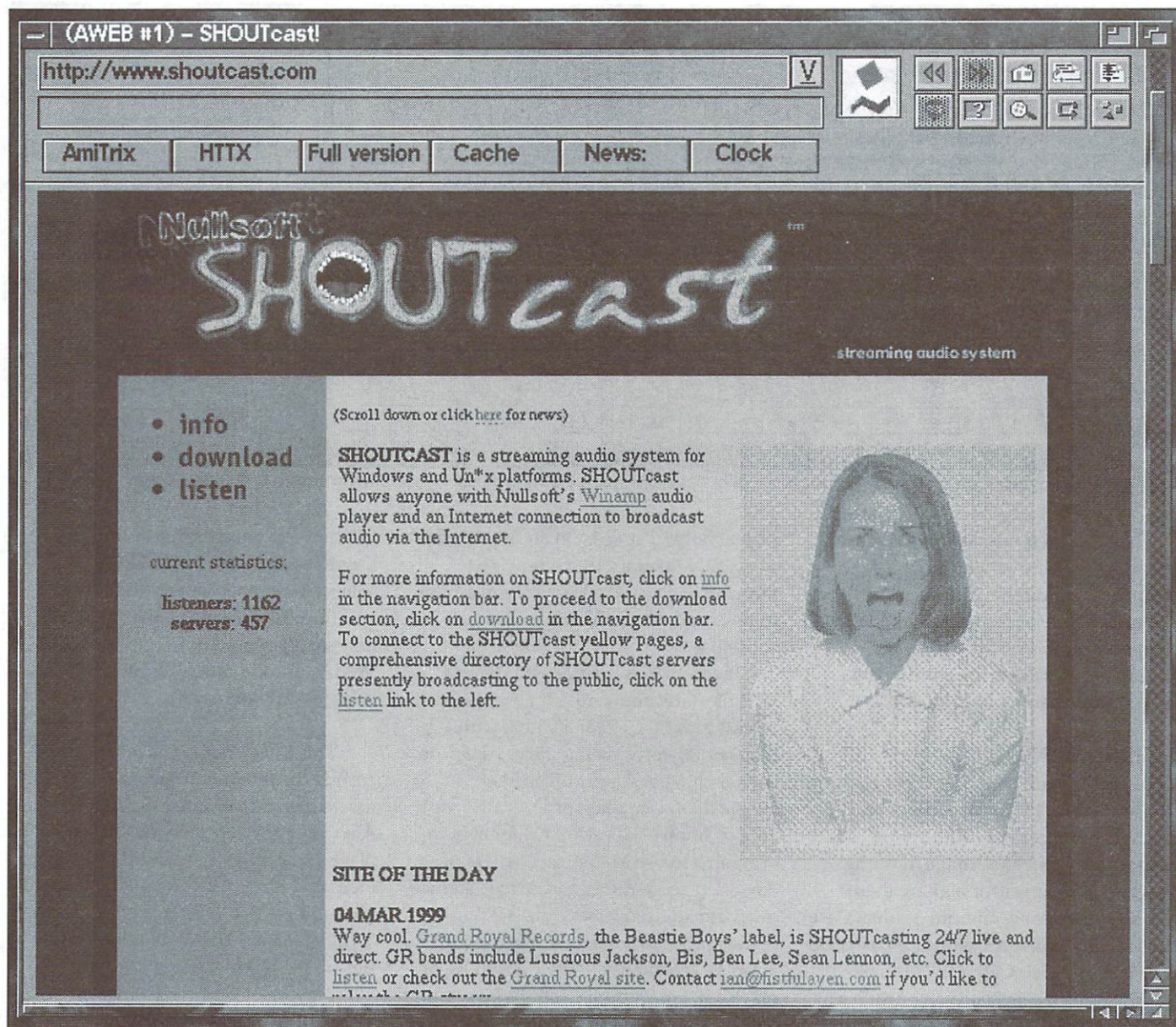
The reason may lie in MP3's "underground" beginning. Since MP3 files are manageable in size, MP3s became very popular by pirates and bootleggers. Internet sites sprang up everywhere offering various song titles for download and trading. The economic implications of MP3 were troublesome to the music industry. Recently, Lycos' partner, Fast, was sued by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) due to their MP3 Search Engine for violating a portion of copyright law known as "contributory infringement". Clearly, the industry has been less than pleased about MP3.

However, there are also good uses for the MP3 file format. One of the main benefits of MP3 is that it has allowed aspiring music artists the ability to distribute and market their work without the need of a large investment. On MP3.com's web site is a host of free music available for all tastes. Even established artists are starting to see the value in MP3. Artist like David Bowie and the Beastie Boys have offered free music from their web sites as a reward to their loyal fans. Aminet has a good amount of MP3s available under their "mods/mp3" directory.

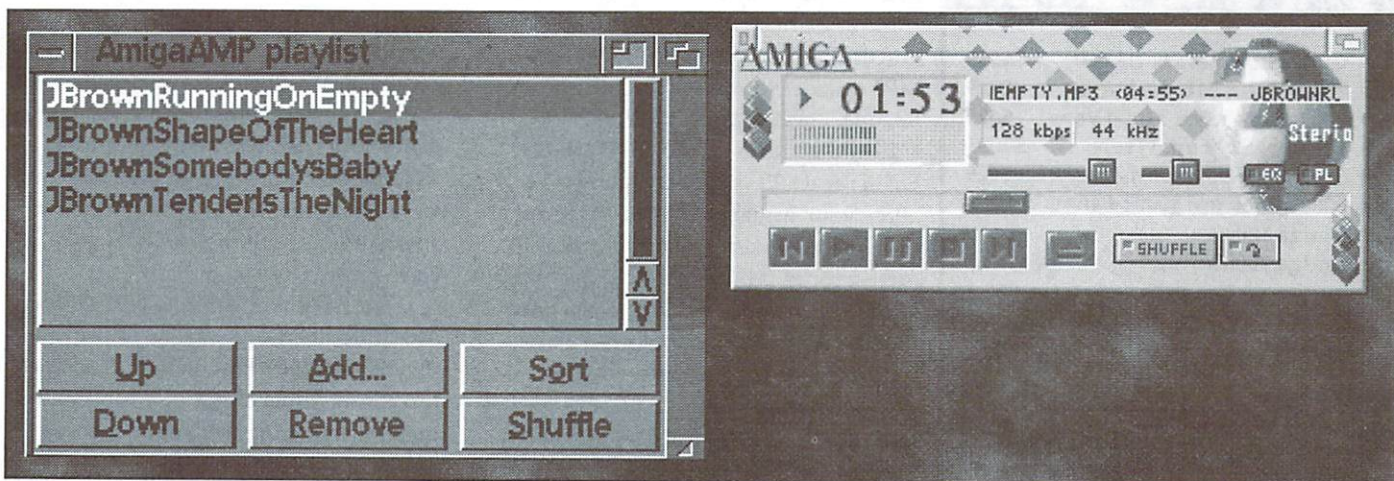
Recently MP3.com also announced the appointment of Gateway's CEO Ted Waite to their Board of Directors. A very excited Ted Waite stated, "I believe in digital distribution of music, and with more and more consumers and artists flocking to MP3.com, I think that they have only scratched the surface of how people will learn about, listen to, and buy music in the future." Several MP3 playback appliances like Diamond Rio's Walkman-like player, and Empeg-Car MP3 car stereo are increasing in popularity.



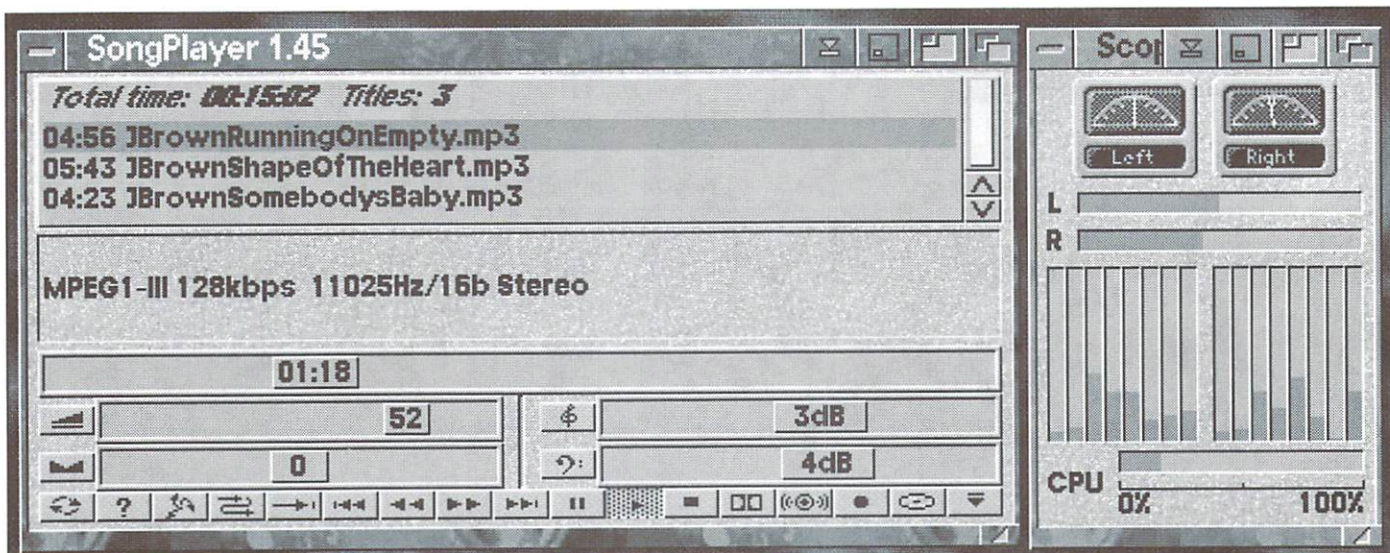
Ryan's MP3 Linux based car mp3 player



Shoutcast features various Internet Radio stations with varied genre from Classic Rock, Techno-Dance, and even a 24-Hour a Day Adam Sandler station!



AmigaAMP is the most CPU intensive playback program on the Amiga.



SongPlayer's playback on standard Amigas is close to CD quality at 14-bits, and it is CD quality on supported sound cards.

Not to be left off the boat, Microsoft announced their own version of a compressed audio file format called MSAudio 4.0. Microsoft claims better compression and security for their format, but it is not known if they will open source their version like MP3.

Encoding MP3s

Lets be frank here. If you have access to a souped up PC or Mac, use that machine for encoding. While good encoders exist for the Amiga, nothing beats muscle power for making these files in a reasonable amount of time. Case in point, if you use a Pentium II based PC with Xing's AudioCatalyst (<http://www.xingtech.com>) you can encode a song in less time than it takes to play it

back at normal speed. On an 040 Amiga, it typically takes around 4 hours to encode a song. An 060 Amiga can do it in an hour and a half. Which would you rather use?

If you plan to encode and decode MP3 files I recommend your Amiga have at least a 68030 CPU at 50 mhz, with a 68060 or PowerPC being ideal. Also, you will need to get support files like `mpega.lha` (`mus/play`) or `mpega_library.lha` (`util/libs`) for certain programs to use MP3 files. Owners of PowerUp accelerators and Amiga sound cards are advised to seek out MP3 related programs for their hardware to improve the quality of their encoding or playback. For example, folks who use Haage&Partner's WarpUP should try `mpega-WarpUP.lha` (`util/libs`). Additional files needed include `asyncio.library` (`dev/c`), and the AHI audio system "`ahiusr.lha`" (`mus/misc`).

Mike Cheng of CStarware (<http://linux.tc3net.com/cstar/>) has made a MP3 encoder for the Amiga called MP3 Encode. Located on Aminet as `MP3Enc.lha` (`mus/misc`), MP3 encode has several CPU specific versions to allow your Amiga to encode tracks off a CD. You may wish to use a "ripper" to extract songs off various CDs on to your hard drive before encoding if you have the disk space. MP3 Encode is a CLI based program based off publicly available Linux source code. Several GUI front ends are also available off Aminet like EasyEncode. While not as sophisticated as the packages available on the

PC, they do make the job easier. EasyEncode by Jan Schwenke is available from Aminet (`mus/misc`).

Encoding a song is as easy as the following command:
TEMP:>encode cd0:AIFF_Stereo/Track.3
"NameYouWant.mp3"

This is assuming that you wish to encode the third track from a CD in CD0: to an assigned volume called TEMP:. Also, the program "encode" has to be placed somewhere in your path statement, like the C: directory. Notice that the subdirectory used from the CD was "AIFF_Stereo". There are other directories on the CD that should be ignored.

Playing MP3s on an Amiga

There are several programs and GUI front ends that allow you to playback MP3s on your Amiga. However, in the interest of time I will highlight only three playback programs: SongPlayer, AmigaAMP, and StreamMP3. The beauty of Amiga MP3 players is that most of the necessary files are located on Aminet for free. The following programs were tested on my Amiga 4000 with an 060 CPU, AmigaOS 3.1, 48 Mb fast RAM, stock audio, and Picasso96 RTG software.

For those Amiga users with 030 and 040 CPUs, there are ways to improve playback of MP3 files on your machines. Increasing buffer size, decreasing sound quality, and using the "mono" setting will help prevent slow, distorted playback. There are many sound cards

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on the Amiga that can also help by taking over the sound generation from the main CPU. People who use CyberGraphics RTG need to download Cyber56khz.lha (gfx/board) to increase the calibration of the audio playback. Apparently the Amiga's sound chip has timing issues with the screen refresh rate. This program bumps up Paula's ability to allow playback of 56 kHz samples based on CyberGraphic's timing, not the AGA chipset's. Picasso96 users do not need this file, it is handled automatically.

One interesting thing to note. When playing back MP3s on my Amiga, I can multitask with no pauses or drop off in the music's playback. I once copied an MP3 off a CD to my hard drive while playing back the same MP3 on SongPlayer with no interruptions. Frequently on my PC at work, I would experience short interruptions during playback when Windows decided it needed to spin my hard drive (despite having 64 Mb of RAM).

AmigaAMP 2.5

AmigaAMP 2.5 (mus/play), by Thomas Wenzel, is a port of XAMP (or WinAMP) is certainly the prettiest Amiga MP3 player. Featuring versions for 68k and PPC, AmigaAmp features the ability to use the thousands of "skins" available to WinAMP. Skins allow AmigaAMP to change the appearance of the program's GUI. AmigaAMP uses the mpeg.a.library on the 68k processor, or an internal decoding engine for the PPC version. Sound is played back using the AHI audio system, but due to the CPU load does not approach CD quality. AmigaAMP supports ID3 tags (scrollable file information) and play lists.

AmigaAMP is the most CPU intensive playback program on the Amiga. Surprisingly it also featured the poorest playback quality (without using a sound card). Thomas admittedly states, "AmigaAMP is optimized for visual appearance and accuracy, not for speed!" Installation was fairly simple, just expand the file archive where you want, no assign statements are needed.

Other Amiga MP3 playback programs now feature the ability to use "skins" also, with better playback quality. For example, TMLG (mus/play) and AMPLifier (mus/play). These other

programs look the same as AmigaAMP, but feature slightly better audio quality during playback. Thomas is focusing on improving the program's quality and adding visual plug-ins like a Spectrum Analyzer. For more information on AmigaAMP, surf to "<http://amigaamp.amiga-software.com>".

SongPlayer

SongPlayer (mus/play), by Stephane Tavenard, is a multi-format audio file player that includes support for MP3. While not as pretty as AmigaAMP, its playback quality is far superior. SongPlayer requires MUI and AHI. On standard Amigas, playback is close to CD quality at 14-bits, and is CD quality on supported sound cards. SongPlayer allows play lists, and has limited ID3 Tag support.

SongPlayer's installation is handled by a fairly standard installation script. While SongPlayer doesn't support skins, you can redo the GUI by modifying the button's IFF file.

SongPlayer features a nice sound meter and spectrum analyzer during playback. As mentioned earlier SongPlayer handles multiple file formats including IFF, AIFF, WAV, AU, and CDDA.

StreamMP3

StreamMP3 (comm/www), by Sigbjørn Skjret, is an ARexx script that enables you to stream MP3 files directly off the internet. Requiring rxsocket.lha (comm/tcp), this file functions as a plug-in for IBrowse or AWeb. While not a stand-alone playback program. You can use Stream MP3 to listen to MP3 encoded streaming audio from many web sites like Shoutcast (<http://www.shoutcast.com>). Shoutcast features various Internet Radio stations with varied genre from Classic Rock, Techno-Dance, and even a 24 Hour a Day Adam Sandler station!

Streaming MP3 files of course lack the overall quality of playing back the file off your hard drive. The faster your connection to the net, the better your results will be. Given the limitations of standard analog phone lines, don't expect CD quality unless you are lucky enough to have ADSL, ISDN, or cable modem connections.

Included with StreamMP3's file archive are instructions on how to set it up with IBrowse or AWeb. There is no installer script, but copying the files where they need to be isn't rocket science. You will also need to edit the ARexx script to tell it where the needed "rx" (to execute ARexx scripts) file resides.

Conclusion

Despite not having the modern muscle power, or true 16-bit audio, owning an Amiga doesn't mean you have to miss out on MP3. There are many programs that will allow you to either encode or decode these files with relative ease. This article only begins to touch upon the many issues surrounding MP3 files, and the programs you can use for them on your Amiga. I encourage you to explore Aminet and other Amiga web sites to find the one you like best, especially owners of Amiga PowerPC and sound cards.

For more information, check out these web sites:

MP3 on the Amiga - http://www.terravista.pt/guincho/1139/amiga_mp3.html
MP3.com - <http://www.mp3.com>
MP3Car.com - <http://www.mp3car.com/>
AmigaAMP - <http://amigaamp.amiga-software.com>
CStartWare - <http://linux.tc3net.com/cstar>
Aminet - <http://ftp.uni-paderborn.de/aminet>

One last thing. For you hacker types, surf on over to <http://home1.gte.net/flogger/mp3car> and make your own Amiga based MP3 Car Player. Casey Halverson outlines what is needed, as well as the theories behind such a project. As expected, Casey, Amazing Computing/Amiga, and myself are not responsible if you toast your Amiga and your car if you make an attempt at this project!

•AC•

*Please Write to:
Fabian Jimenez
c/o Amazing Computing
P.O. Box 9490
Fall River, MA 02720*

Handling Text in PageStream3

Getting control of what text you place, how you enter it and what you can do with it.

by William F. Maddock

Last issue we ran through some of the more important aspects of the PageStream3 user interface. This month we will go over the basic text-handling features of PageStream3.

Although it shouldn't be necessary to say this, you should always have your copy of PageStream3 open and ready to go when you get to these articles. Unless specifically stated, we will be using a US Letter sized page in portrait orientation. Eventually we will be creating a particular project, but for now, we'll just be walking through the basic features of the program.

Text Objects

In PageStream3 there are several ways to get text onto the page. First, you can either type it in directly or import it. And in either of those cases, you can put it in a "Text Frame" or you can just place the text cursor somewhere on the page and put the text there.

The latter method is known as creating a **text object**. The normal way of doing this is by typing the text directly onto the page. This is convenient for short stretches of text such as **headlines** or **pull quotes**. A headline is simply the title of an article or story. A pull quote is a short bit of text pulled from the article or story and placed in such a way as to keep, or gain, the reader's interest. An example from a product review might be like the one at right.

To create a text object, go to the ToolBox and click on the icon that looks like a capitol "A". This will put PageStream3 in Text Mode. Move the mouse pointer over your (hopefully already opened) page and click the left mouse button. This places the text cursor on the page at the point where you clicked the mouse. When you're creating a text

object, there is no set right margin, so if you're going to have more than one line of text, you'll have to enter the linefeeds manually by hitting the return key, like you would on an old style typewriter. Now, go ahead and type something.

Congratulations! You've just created your first text object in PageStream3.

Text Frames

When I was editor of the *G.A.C. FLAK* newsletter, I used text objects and text frames all the time. Text objects are easy. You type in a few words, pick your font, fine tune the placement, and you're done. Text Frames are a different story. There's lots more to them, but you'll find that you use them much more than text objects. The vast majority of your PageStream text will go into text frames.

There are two ways to create a normal text frame in PageStream3. Either you use the menu command **Layout/Create Text Frames...** or you click in the ToolBox on the icon that looks like a bunch of lines. The former method is more automated, and therefore more useful for creating several pages worth of Text Frames.

"The Amazing PageStream3 Makes DTP easy!"

When you use the ToolBox to create a text frame, your pointer will change to a crosshair. You create the text frame this way by drawing it out in the same fashion that you would use to draw a box. Place the pointer at one corner of the space you want the text frame to cover, click the mouse, draw it down to the opposite cor-

ner of the target area and click the mouse again. Your new text frame will be created to fit the bounding box you just drew. Of course, you can use this same method to produce text frames with one, two or three columns per frame by holding the left mouse button over the text frame icon in the ToolBox and choosing the one, two, or three column icon from the bar that will appear.

You can also use the menu command, mentioned above, to create frames in a more automated fashion. Choosing this command will bring up the Create Text Frames requester. At the top there will be a pop-up menu for selecting the chapter you want to add the text frames in. Leave it set to **Untitled** for now.

Below that you will see a group of four editable text gadgets, for setting the inside, outside, top, and bottom margins (when working on a single-sided document, as we are now doing, inside is left). My defaults are set to 0.5", 0.5", 1", and 1" respectively. Anything reasonable should do just fine for our purposes here.

Next to that is a pair of editable text gadgets. Labeled "Columns", this group lets you set the number of columns in the frame, and the spacing (or "Gutter") between each pair of columns in the frame. My defaults have these set to 2, and 0.25" respectively.

Below this are gadgets to set the range of pages that you want to create the frames on, and a check box for selecting whether or not to link the created frames to each other. Linking frames allows text to flow smoothly and automatically between them. I always have this checked. Set the "From" and "To" gadgets to 1 and 10. Once everything is set right, click on "Create" to create the text frames.

You will note that the Page number gadget in the bottom of your document

	<p> Lorem ipsum.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.</p> <p> Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.</p> <p> Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Duis autem.</p> <p> Nam liber tempor cum soluta nobis eleifend option congue nihil imperdiet doming id quod mazim placerat facit possim assum. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.</p> <p> Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing</p>	<p> elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.</p> <p> autem vel.</p> <p> Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.</p> <p> Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.</p> <p> Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore et feugiat nulla facilisis.</p> <p> Lorem ipsum.</p>	

Genesis

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cursor. If you have good eyes and a good, high resolution display, you will notice that there is now a flashing text cursor in the top-left of the frame in which you clicked.

Now you can start typing text in manually, or you can import the text. Select the menu command **File/Insert Text**. This will bring up a file requester. If the defaults are still set as they were at installation, you should be in the "Text" directory under the PageStream3: assign. In this directory you should find a file titled "LoremIpsum". Select that file. This will bring up the Insert Text requester. This shows you which format PageStream3 believes the text is importable as. It also allows you to set some options. I have "Convert Quotes" and "Convert Dashes" selected, while "Line has LF" is unselected. "Character Set" is set to "Amiga", and "Text Codes" is set to "<None>". For now, just click on "Insert".

This should give you about two and a half pages of Latin text. Don't worry, you don't need to read it. It's just a sample. Honest.

Once the Lorem Ipsum text is imported, it will all be highlighted. This is to

allow you to immediately begin formatting it as you wish. The text will be flush with the left margin and ragged on the right margin. This is known as **Left-Aligned** text. Select the menu command:

Type/Alignment/Justified.

This will reformat the text so that it is flush with both side margins, like you might see in a newspaper or a book. Next, select the menu command:

Type/Hyphenation/Auto Hyphenation.

This will hyphenate the words in the text according to a hyphenation algorithm, allowing you to save space while giving a more evenly spaced appearance to the text on the page.

Next, choose the menu command:

Type/Kerning/Auto Kerning.

This also helps make the text appear more evenly spaced by controlling the spacing of various pairs of letters. Your page should now look similar to the one in the picture on page 37.

Next, open the edit palette if it's not already opened. Select the menu command **Windows/Show Edit Palette**. The edit palette is one of the best features of PageStream3. It brings so much convenience

to PageStream3. It's almost unbelievable, in fact.

In text mode, showing the character attributes, the edit palette shows which font is being used, which text style, if any, which type style (Bold, Italic, etc.), type size, type width, kerning and line spacing (leading). If you click on the paragraph symbol (¶), the edit palette changes to show the paragraph attributes (alignment, paragraph style, if any, first line indent, left and right margin indents, and spacing before and after each paragraph).

We will be using the Edit Palette extensively in future installments, so, while the Edit Palette is still open, select the menu command **Windows/Remember Window Positions**. This way, each time you open PageStream3, that treasure will be there right away.

In the next installment, I'll get into graphics a little bit. This will be a little more fun for me.

My email address is wmaddock@iconstl.net if any of you have questions or suggestions.

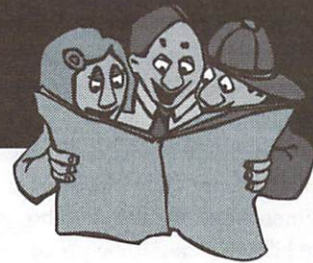
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REBOL(TM)/Core Messaging Language 2.0

Lesson One: Working with a Scripting/Messaging Language



by Bohdan Lechnowsky
Quality Assurance Coordinator
REBOL Technologies



You're at your computer thinking, "Gee, what tool am I going to use to do *this*?" If you're asking that question about a scripting or 'net-related project, that answer will more than likely be REBOL if my experience with it is any indication.

In this column, I hope to enlighten you on how REBOL/Core 2.0 differs from its previous incarnation (1.0.3) and also teach you how to use it by a genuinely useful example.

New to 2.0

2.0 has many additions and changes since REBOL/Core 1.0.3. The code has been extensively rewritten on all platforms resulting in a 50% decrease in size. The average executable has now been reduced from the previously miniscule 250K or so to around 125K. Compare this to the size of Perl (measured in megabytes) and you'll see what I'm talking about.

This total rewrite has also allowed the speed of the interpreter to increase by 10 to 20 times or more, in some cases. This is great for those time-consuming tasks often required in data-processing.

Also, error checking has been added allowing the user to trap and handle errors which might have otherwise caused the script to exit before completion. An example of a script-killing error occurs when trying to access a web page which no longer exists or is not accessible. The error can be caught and handled by the script now instead of exiting.

All these features are great for a scripting language, but REBOL/Core is also a "messaging language". Its real strength lies in its ability to easily send and receive messages over a network, such as the Internet. Perhaps one of the most exciting additions to REBOL/Core 2.0, in my opinion, is the ability for users to define their own Internet and messaging protocols. This becomes really exciting once the possibilities come to mind: a truly cross-platform instant messaging protocol; an easily-written network game; and more.

"Flexibility" is one of the key words in REBOL scripting. Much of the flexibility only found in very low-level languages like assembler is now possible in a very-high-level language.

Tutorial

To show some of the power of REBOL/Core 2.0, I will show how easy it is to write software which will help you keep up-to-date with your favorite web pages. REBOL scripts can be written in any editor which can save the file as ASCII (standard text). Keep in mind that this tutorial is being written before REBOL/Core 2.0 development has been completed, so some minor details may have changed.

Also, please remember that once this script is written, you will be able to run it without any changes on nearly any computer running any 32-bit operating system ever created.

First of all, we will need the REBOL header. It tells the reader all about the script.

REBOL [

Title: "REBOL Web Miner"

Date: 8-Mar-1999

Author: "Bohdan Lechnowsky"

File: %rwm.r

Email: bo@rebol.com

Purpose: { To extract links from our favorite web pages. }

As in REBOL/Core 1.0.3, strings can be represented by quotes or curly braces ({}). Quotes are used for short strings, and curly braces are used for strings which span multiple lines. The REBOL interpreter will automatically convert between the two based on the data found within.

Also, files are specified by a leading percent sign (%), and dates are specified by day, month, year format.

The keyword 'REBOL' tells the interpreter it has found the beginning of a REBOL script. Any text found before the 'REBOL' keyword is ignored. This is especially useful for

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Just a reminder, you can download the REBOL Messaging Language for all Platforms -FREE-

attaching REBOL scripts to emails or web pages which can then be executed without extracting the script from the email or web page first.

Now that we know about the header, let's start out with a useful function. We will need a function which extracts links from an HTML page (basically, a long string). Here is what the function header looks like:

```
find-links: func [html] []
```

'find-links' is the name of the function. Because it is followed by a colon (:), it is telling the interpreter that this is the name of the function. 'func' is a REBOL 'native' stating a function definition is about to take place.

The areas surrounded by square brackets ([]) are called 'blocks' in REBOL/Core. Functions require two blocks; function arguments and the function body. In this function, we are calling the HTML string to be processed 'html'.

REBOL/Core 2.0 supports built-in function help and datatype definitions. To add these to our function header, it would look like this:

```
find-links: func [  
  "Finds 'href' links in an HTML page and outputs them as a block"  
  html [string!] "The HTML text to parse"] []
```

The first string in the block is the description of the function. The '[string!]' following the parameter name tells the interpreter to only allow strings to be passed to this function. This is an optional addition but handy for reducing the amount of code the user has to write. The string following the datatype definition is the description for the 'html' parameter. After this function is defined and when the user types 'help find-links' at the REBOL prompt, the following is displayed:

```
Finds 'href' links in an HTML page and outputs them as a block  
Arguments:  
html — The HTML text to parse (must be: string)
```

(The exact output of the help function may change in the final release of 2.0.)

Now on to the body of the function. We want the links to be output as a block when the function is complete, so we should define an empty block first.

```
links: make block! 0
```

The interpreter will now make an empty block and assign it to the word 'links'. Next, we will need a loop to pull out all the links. In HTML, a link looks like this:

```
<a href = "http://www.rebol.com">REBOL Home Page</a>
```

Here is what the processing loop could look like (but we will streamline it shortly):

```
while [found? find html "href"] [  
  html: find html "href" ;step 1  
  html: find html "=" ;step 2  
  html: next html ;step 3  
  end: find html ">" ;step 4  
  link: copy/part html end ;step 5  
  link: trim link ;step 6  
  append links link ;step 7  
]
```

'while' is a REBOL native that takes two blocks: a true/false comparison and the body. The body is only interpreted while the comparison block is true. In this case, we are telling the interpreter to only process the body if the substring we are looking for, "href", is found after the current position in the 'html' string. 'found?' returns true if the result of a 'find' operation is successful and false otherwise.

Step 1 moves the pointer of the string (which is always at the beginning of the string when it is defined) to the point where "href" was found.

Step 2 moves the string pointer to the first equals sign after the "href".

Step 3 moves to the next position after the equals sign (because we don't want to include it as part of the link).

Step 4 looks for the first occurrence of the greater-than symbol (>) which will indicate the end of the link.

Step 5 copies out the substring that starts at the position after the equals sign and ends at the position before the greater than symbol (the link).

Step 6 trims off any spaces from the beginning or the end of the link.

Step 7 inserts the link into the block named 'links'.

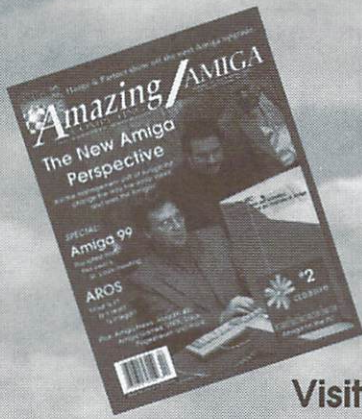
All this can be accomplished elegantly in REBOL/Core 2.0 with a one-line command. It isn't as easy to read for a beginner, but it becomes easier with experience and has a much cleaner look. Coding in the REBOL language can be seen as more than just accomplishing a task, it can also be a higher form of art.

```
while [found? html: find html "href"] [  
  append links (trim (copy/part (next (find html "=")) (find  
html ">"))))  
]
```

This version also interprets faster. The parentheses are only added here for clarity's sake. The second line of code could also be written as:

```
append links trim copy/part next find html "=" find html ">"
```

Analyzing the process of interpretation makes this much easier to understand. First, the interpreter sees the word 'append'. It knows 'append' takes two arguments: the block or string to append to, and what to append to it. The first argument is easy as it is currently an empty block named 'links'. The second argument of 'append' starts with 'trim'. The interpreter knows that this takes one argument, a string to trim spaces from. 'copy/part' returns a string specified by a



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starting pointer in the string and an ending pointer in the string. This process is continued in a similar manner until the entire line is interpreted.

REBOL/Core 2.0 also has a parse dialect that can handle this sort of thing in a very efficient manner, but for the purposes of this tutorial the above method works just as well. 'Parse' is a very powerful feature of 2.0 that suits itself well to very complex parsing applications. It also allows the definition of alternate dialects tailored to particular needs.

Another interesting feature I slipped into this example is the ability to assign a value to a variable at any point during the interpretation. Notice how I inserted the result of 'find' to the string pointer 'html'. This keeps us from having to do the 'find' of "href" in the 'html' string twice.

Our completed function and the remainder of the pieces needed to pull out the links from a list of web pages will look like this:

```
REBOL [
  Title: "REBOL Web Miner"
  Date: 8-Mar-1999
  Author: "Bohdan Lechnowsky"
  File: %rwm.r
  Email: bo@rebol.com
  Purpose: {
    To extract links from our favorite web pages.
  }
]

find-links: func [
  "Finds 'href' links in an HTML page and outputs them as a block"
  html [string!] "The HTML text to parse"

  [
    links: make block! 0
    while [found? html: find html "href"] [
      append links (trim (copy/part (next (find html "="))
        (find html ">"))))
    ]
    return links
  ]

  urls: [
```

```
http://www.rebol.com
http://www.cucug.org/aminew.html
http://www.pimpub.com
]
```

```
newlinks: make block! 0
foreach url urls [
  append newlinks find-links read url
]
```

Notice that in addition to 'find-links' there is also a 'urls' definition. This block contains three URLs to process. It could contain any number of URLs without any change to the processing code as the 'foreach' will process them one-by-one automatically. This could have been read in from a text file just as easily.

'newlinks' is a block which has been initialized to hold all the links found from all the sites.

'foreach' is a powerful command which allows the interpreter to pull out items from a list one-by-one each time through the loop until all the items have been processed. This is great for processing lists of items, as in this case. Each time through the loop, the value 'url' which was specified in the 'foreach' header holds the next url to process from the 'urls' list.

At this point, embedded commands are used once again to get many things done in a small amount of space. First, the current location specified by the value of 'url' is read in as a string and passed to our function 'find-links'. 'find-links' returns the list of links found and appends them to the 'newlinks' list.

I hope this has been a good introduction to the power of REBOL/Core 2.0 and has offered some ideas of what it can be used for. Next time, we will expand on this script and turn it into a really useful tool for mining the information you want from the web automatically.

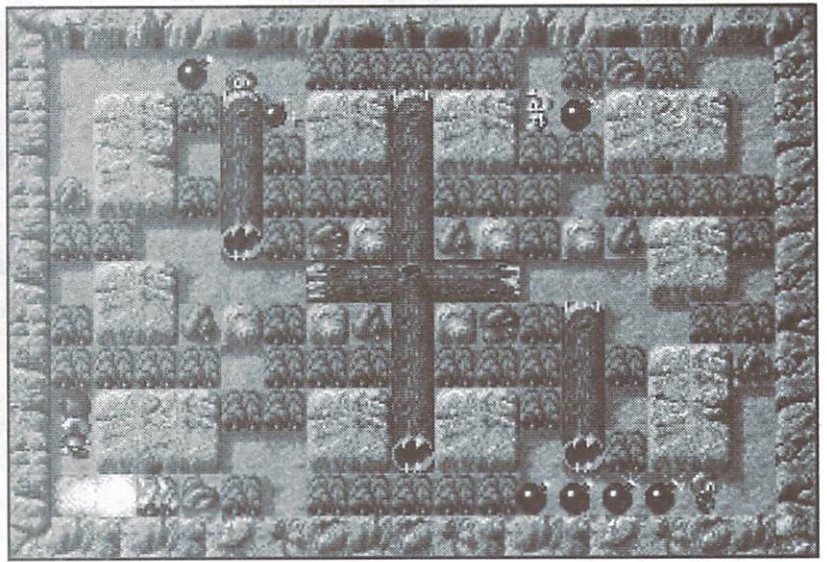
In closing, I would like to thank Danny Ramsey, REBOL Technologies' Chief Technical Writer, and Carl Sassenrath, creator of the REBOL language, for their input to this article.

•AC•

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Commercial To Freeware: Games That Never Quite Made It

by Jake Frederick



Blitz Bombers

For one reason or another, it's not uncommon for a commercial game's development to be halted prior to its release. Usually these games remain half finished, sitting on a hard drive somewhere to collect dust. Sometimes, as in the case of the recently released Putty Squad, they will get snatched up by a different publisher several years later. Once in a while, when a game is near completion, the authors will finish it and put it on the internet for anyone who wishes to download. Here's a quick roundup of a few of these commercial-gone-freeware games. Keep in mind that some of them are quite old, so don't expect compatibility and system friendliness to be on par with the commercial games of today.

Blitz Bombers

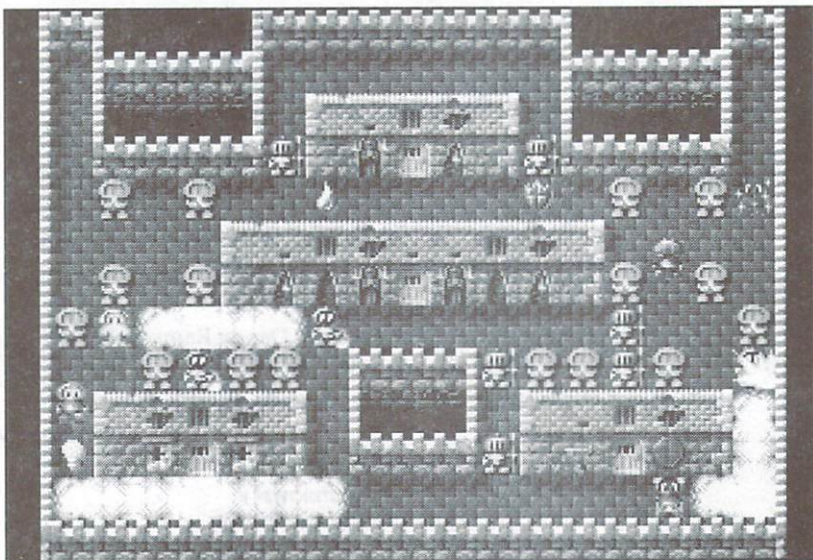
Despite being grouped in a genre that is rapidly becoming as prevalent and ridiculed as Breakout clones, Blitz Bombers stands out amongst the competition. It is, as you may have guessed, a Bomberman clone that has you running through power-up filled mazes, dropping bombs in an attempt to destroy your opponents. Since the game was intended for commercial release it shows a little more polish than your average PD effort.

Thankfully, the fundamental gameplay that made Bomberman such a hit in the first place has remained intact. The action is as fast and frantic as ever, and there are plenty of power-ups to keep you going. The major thing that sets

Blitz Bombers apart is the polish and attention to detail. Each stage has its own look and theme with fitting music, creating a unique atmosphere from level to level. You'll find yourself blasting holes in Egyptian tombs, icebergs, and chips on giant motherlands, among other things.

While most games of this type provide hours of multiplayer entertainment, the majority have lacked any sort of single player mode. Blitz Bombers addresses this problem, offering a decent single player game that requires you to perform various tasks such as finding keys and destroying generators. It's essentially a race against the clock as most of the enemies simply wander about the mazes aimlessly, either not knowing or not caring that a man in a brightly colored suit is detonating powerful explosives in their environment. This can be entertaining for a while, but is not fast paced enough to have any lasting appeal.

At the end of the day, Blitz Bombers is still just one of hundreds of Bomberman clones dressed up and presented with a little more flair. However, as Bomberman clones go, it is one of the better offerings. The game's only glaring flaw (which some may consider fatal) is its habit of locking up after the first round of a multiplayer game. If this type of game appeals to you then you certainly won't be disappointed, just don't expect to be blown away by its innovation.



Blitz Bombers

Rating: B

Download Blitz Bombers from Aminet/
game/2play/BlitzBombers.lha

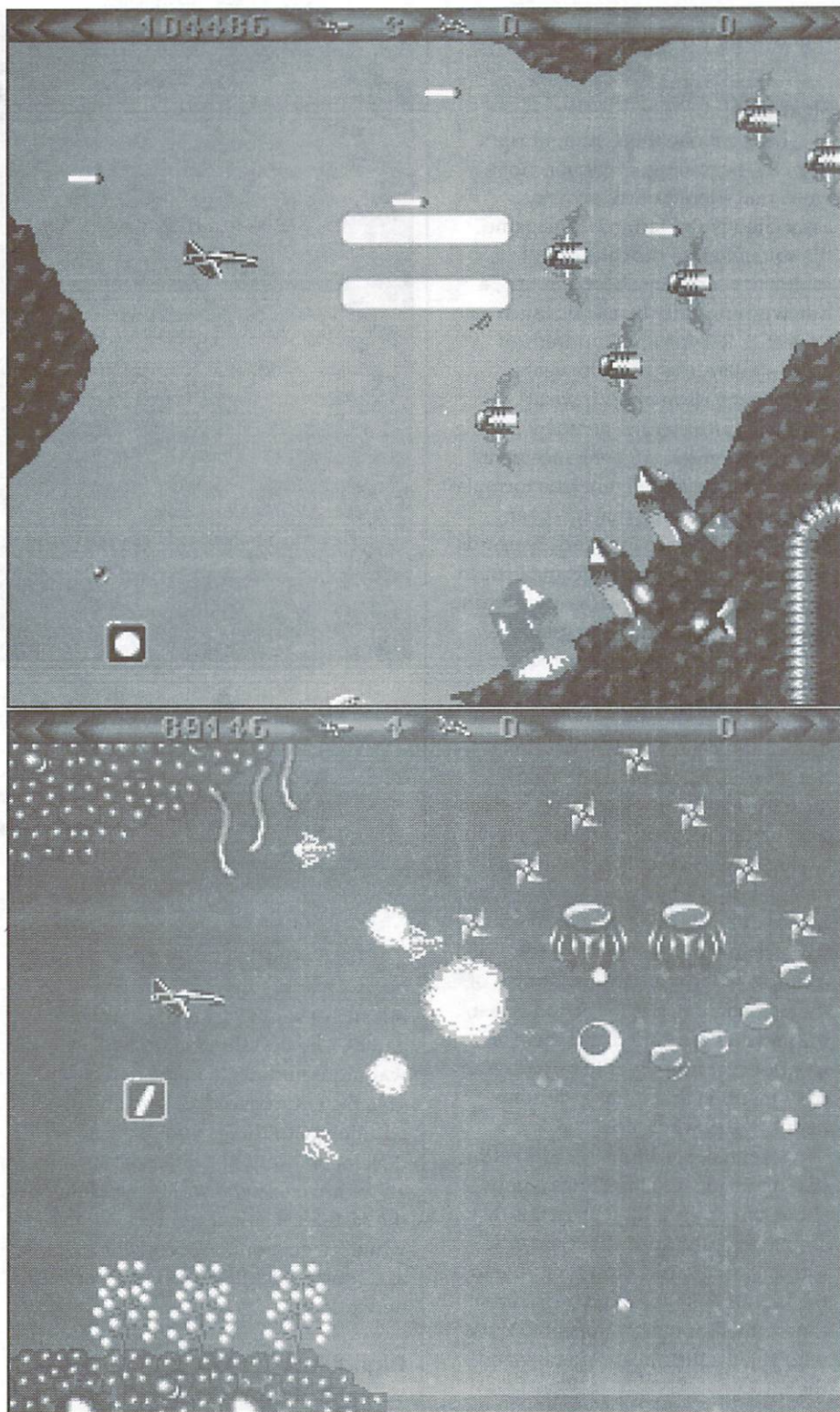
Hoi AGA

The story behind Hoi AGA is really a sad one that reflects the root of many problems in the Amiga industry today. Team Hoi, who was responsible for a number of demos earlier in the decade, created a platformer featuring a cute, green character named Hoi in 1991. After having the game delayed, pirated, and only receiving a mere \$500 for their hard work the team decided to make the game freeware for everyone to enjoy.

The most outstanding aspect of Hoi AGA is its clever gameplay. Rather than stomping or shooting hordes of pesky enemies, as in most platformers, Hoi takes a more creative, timing and puzzle based approach. Level two equips you with a rocket pack and projectiles which fire from your mouth, but it's not taken to the extent that it becomes even remotely violent. Most of the time you will find yourself examining an enemy's movement pattern to find the easiest route of navigation around it or reacting to a platform that just appeared to replace the one you were standing on. Each challenge is unique and successively harder, giving the game a real sense of progression. Thankfully there is a trainer mode which gives you infinite lives as some of the areas are frustratingly difficult.

Hoi's graphics are quite good in a cartoony sort of way. The demo scene roots are obvious, the levels are filled with eye straining effects (particularly the "Epileptic Finale") that prove you don't need a 3D engine to make a game look decent. Though the music is great, it would have been nice to have a few sound effects, as well.

The only thing that Hoi really lacks is a decent interface. There is no title screen or credits, just a window that pops up, asking which level you want to start on and how many lives you want. This is understandable, though, considering the way the developers were cheated, they probably gave up before adding the final details.



Starbirds

All in all, Hoi AGA is an excellent game that proves the platform genre still has plenty of room for original concepts. It's unfortunate that the developers were treated as they were because I would gladly pay a commercial fee for the

game, even now, when it's over five years old.

Rating: A

Download Hoi AGA from aminet/
game/jump/hoiagaremix.lha

Starbirds

Let's get one thing straight right from the beginning, original is not a word that should be in any way associated with Starbirds. The game fits squarely into the category of "sideways scrolling shoot 'em up", a title worn proudly by classics such as Project X, R-Type and hundreds of other similar titles over the years. While many developers have attempted to further the genre by adding various gimmicks and enhancements most opt for the tried and true formula of mindless blasting that has been around since Space Invaders. Starbirds falls into this category, offering little in the way of refreshing ideas and putting the primary focus on solid gameplay.

There really isn't a whole lot to say about the game. The action consists of flying around shooting anything that moves and collecting the occasional power-up. The graphics are below average, and the background song can get on your nerves. So what, I hear you saying, does Starbirds offer? Fortunately it does a fairly good job at what makes or brakes a game. It plays well. It's certainly not the most exiting example of its genre by any stretch of the imagination, but the action is fast, the enemies are varied and there is some decent firepower to be had. And did I mention that it has a simultaneous two player mode?

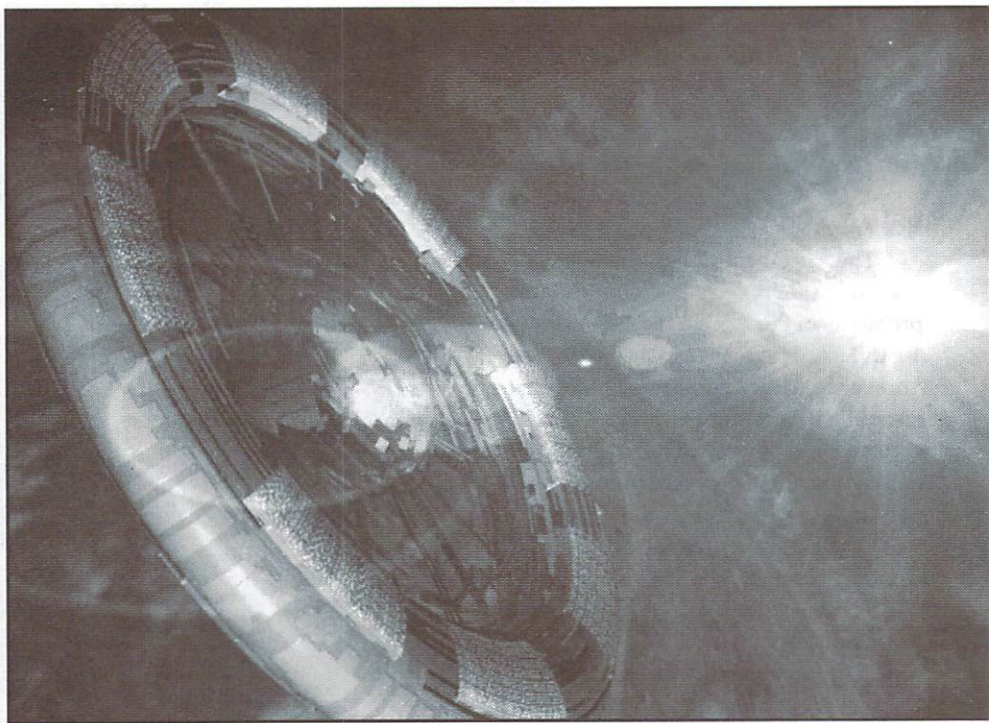
Granted, Starbirds is a solid effort that offers most of the things a good shoot 'em up should. It's just a little too simple and uninspiring for today's rigorous standards. However, due to the lack of this type of game in recent times, it will probably appeal to those who enjoy a little nostalgia now and then.

Rating: C+

Download Starbirds from http://www.haage-partner.de/starbirds/index_e.htm

•AC•

Please Write to:
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Amiga Games News and Previews

by Jake Frederick

It's frustrating when there are so many great previews and screen shots, but such a slight trickle of completed games. The best thing to do while you're waiting is to download the demos and give the authors feedback on changes, additions and things you liked. Most developers want to hear criticism, after all we are ones who will be handing out the cash for the final product. Meanwhile, go get yourself a copy of Napalm and hassle ClickBoom to finish the TCP networking!

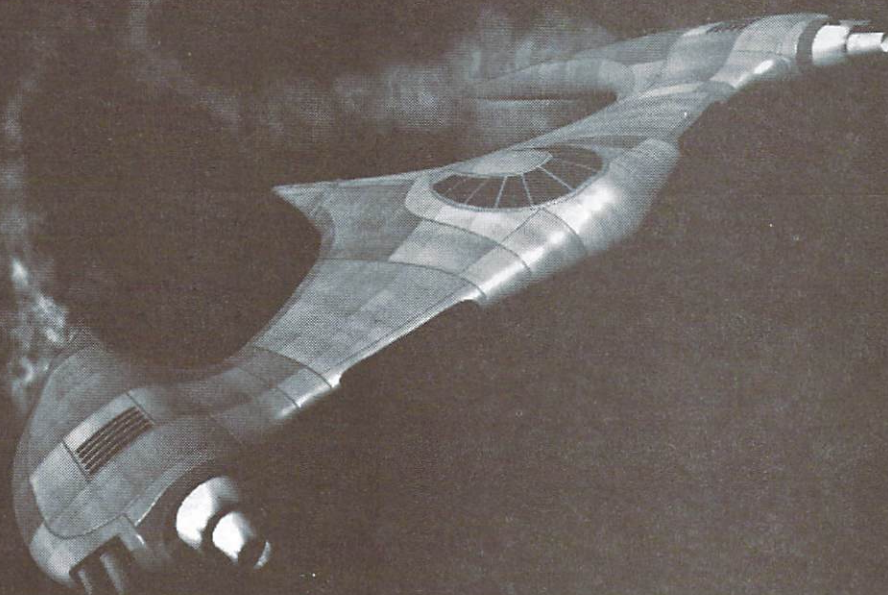
Digital Images News

Although their efforts to bring us Quake II were not successful, Digital Images have not given up. Heretic 2 and F22: Air Dominance Fighter are the latest pursuits in DI's ongoing effort to bring quality PC games to the Amiga. Some may view this with a fair amount of skepticism given the company's previous failed attempts, but their perserverance and commitment should be recognized

and commended just the same. Other titles in the Digital Images pipeline include Wild Fire, a third installment to the popular Zeewolf series, Kitjitsu Warriors, a 3D beat 'em up, and Digital Soccer, a 3D soccer game.

A demo of the space trading simulation Space Station 3000 will be available shortly. The demo is said to show off the game's first person shooter sequences which will take place when boarding opponent's space ships and bases. These sections will use the Genetic Species engine, which DI has licensed from Marble Eyes, so they should look great and run at a reasonable frame rate on moderately expanded machines. Other Space Station 3000 features include: 256 color graphics, CDDA audio, rendered animation sequences, and support for OCS, ECS, AGA and graphics cards. You'll need a CD Rom drive, 20 megs of hard drive space, 1 meg of chip RAM and 3 megs of fast RAM to play the game.

Space Station 3000



Evil's Doom Special Edition

Titan Computer has just released a demo of the new role playing game, Evil's Doom Special Edition. The game features dozens of hand drawn characters and locations, full motion video and speech sequences, hi-res 256 color graphics, and a 3D engine for dungeon sections. To play Evil's Doom you'll need AGA or a graphics card, an '030, a 2x CD-Rom drive and 50 megs of hard drive space. It's been a while since the Amiga has seen a decent RPG, especially one that looks this good, so it looks as if we could all be in for a treat.

Download the demo from Aminet/biz/demo/
EvilsDoom_demo.lha

Cauldron 2000

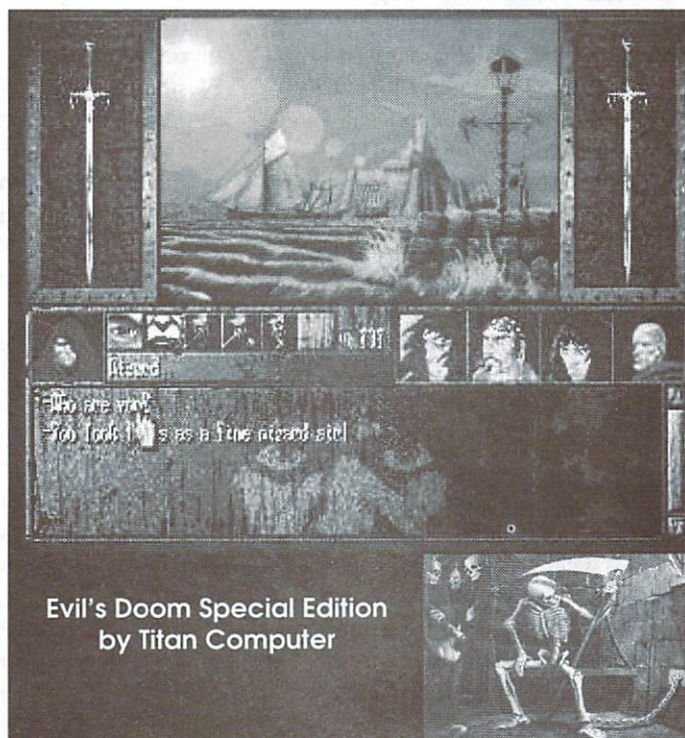
Cauldron 2000 is a freely distributable, third person, multiplayer, internet death-match game in development by the GoAD (Gathering of Amiga Developers), a group set up to allow Amiga developers to share ideas and resources with each other. The group is currently seeking a C or C++ programmer who has access to a PowerPC card to continue the game's development. If you think you can be of assistance e-mail Michael Flaherty at michael@bakakaba.

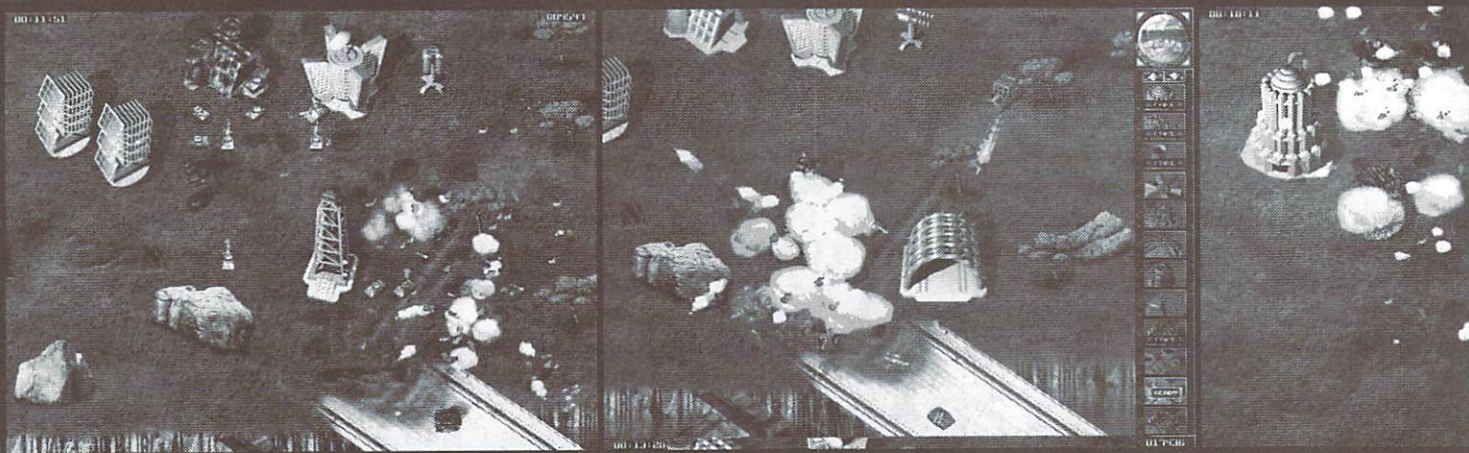
Settlers 2 Cancelled

Unfortunately it has been confirmed that Titan Computer's planned port of Settlers 2 has been cancelled. The company has stated that Bluebyte, the original developers of the popular strategy game, were concerned with the amount of work they would have to put into the Amiga conversion. Despite Titan's assurances that all of the work and customer service would be handled by them, Bluebyte decided to cancel the project.

If you have any announcements you would like to share with Amiga gamers send me an e-mail at gonzo@acadia.net. If you're not net accessible write me at : Jake Frederick c/o Amazing Computing / Amiga, PiM Publications Inc., P.O. Box 9490, Fall River, MA 02720.

•AC•





Napalm

Don't plan on getting much sleep for awhile.

By Jeremy Campbell

Napalm is the latest offering from ClickBOOM. It is a real-time strategy war game that allows you to take control of a vast war campaign and decide the actions of all friendly units. The game is large and comes packed on a CD-ROM. If you are an enthusiast of this type of simulation and intend to buy Napalm then don't plan on getting much sleep for awhile. The details of the game are excellent. The buildings and landscape are very detailed and realistic. It almost reminds me of a satellite photo. The animations of structures being built, soldier battles, and explosions are entertaining and the sound effects are superb. There is no doubt a lot of time went into making Napalm visually and audibly life like.

As the supreme commander you're responsible for establishing a headquarters and home base from which to launch your campaign. This base includes things like refineries, barracks, factories, power plants, research centers, radar outposts, defences, etc. From this base you generate your army by manufacturing troops, tanks, jeeps, aircraft, satellites, and other constructs of war. To generate the money for all this construction, you must send out your oil rigs to drill for oil which is what greases the wheels of all your production.

At the beginning of the game you can choose to play as either Earthlings or Robots. I tried playing it both ways and I

didn't notice a whole lot of differences other than the fact that the vehicles and weapons look and function differently. I especially liked the robots flame throwers. Their fiery ordinance proved to be very effective.

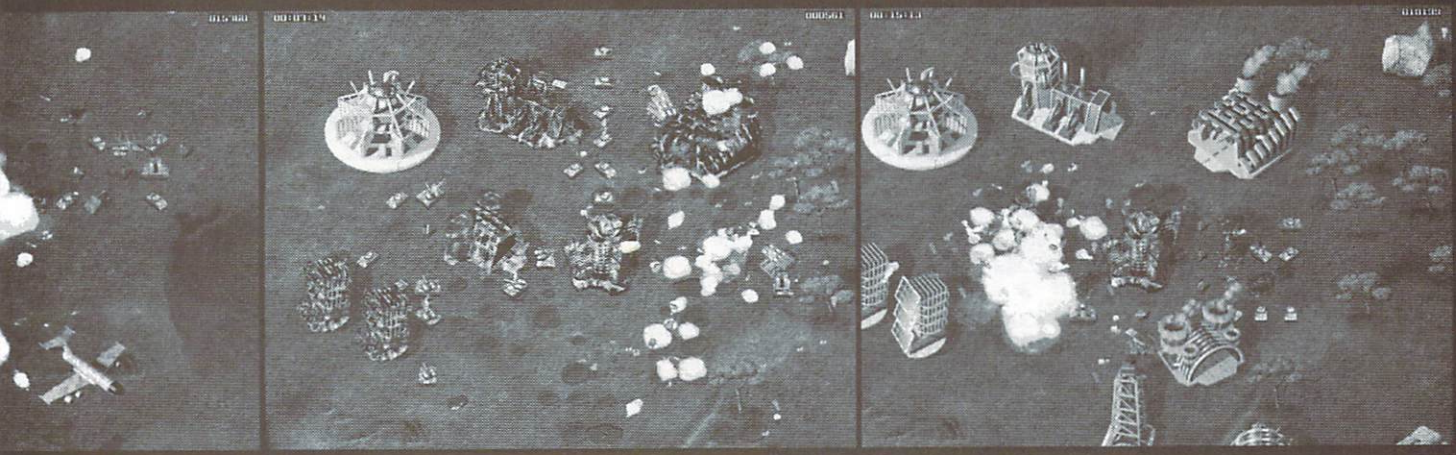
There are a great many units available in Napalm, but many aren't available until you get into the later campaigns. The first couple of campaigns only offer the basics, like infantry, bazookers or flame throwers, light tanks and armored vehicles. In later games you get to use the good stuff, like rocket launchers, heavy tanks, artillery, nitroglycerin, paratroops, laser tanks, plasmer, antigrav units, and nukes.

The landscape is not revealed until you send vehicles or troops to explore it, or once you establish a radar outpost later in the game. Exploring uncharted territory is rather exciting as your squad of infantry, bazookers, jeeps and light tanks will inevitably happen upon the enemy. Once a battle is begun, it is important that you develop an attack strategy instead of simply flinging everything into the fray. It is much better to selectively send certain elements of your squad against specific opponents. By doing this, you can spare a lot of casualties and generally have a better chance of winning a battle.

As with a real war, you must plan ahead and consider all your options before making a decision to act. One

incorrect maneuver could cost you the battle. Napalm allows you to create specific units and assign them a keyboard number. In this way, you can set up strongly armored tank units, fast jeep units, bazooka squads, engineer units or any combination you need. With a quick key stroke, you can gather a specific unit and send it to any needed area. The clever player soon discovers that positioning units in ambush positions and luring the enemy into the trap can win many a battle.

Once you whittle down your enemy's attack units, it's time to take on the enemy base. It's important that you attack a base with care as it can be brimming with powerful defenses. Send in a fast moving unit to survey just what defenses a base has. A good tactic is to take out enemy oil rigs first, cutting off the supply of vital cash generating oil. Once that is accomplished, you should try to eliminate the enemy's means of producing more weapons. Do not simply destroy all the enemy buildings. It is much better to take over select buildings with an engineer or technician unit once it is weakened. This will prevent the enemy from repairing the building and keeping it in production. Of course, destroying buildings is certainly necessary, but beware of the devastating fireball and fiery debris from an exploding building. It can kill or wound units close by.



Overall, the front end of Napalm is well laid out and intuitive, although it is very obvious that a lot was borrowed from the classic game Dune II. That's not a bad thing, since Dune II was probably one of the best Amiga games ever.

Napalm does not have a terribly steep learning curve but for the novice it may seem rather tough. There are a number of key functions that you will need to memorize to become proficient with Napalm, so at first, you will be referencing the small 10 page booklet that passes as the games manual. In short order, the key functions become familiar, and you'll be able to play the game quite efficiently.

You can do most everything with the mouse but the key functions make for excellent shortcuts. There are three ways to scroll the screen; mouse (smooth scrolling by holding down rmb), arrows (they appear when you move the cursor to the edge of the screen), and the cursor keys. The manual suggests that you should never need to scroll. Scrolling was an integral part of every other similar game I've ever played so that suggestion seems a bit impractical. However, by assigning map locations to the 1-9 number keys, you can jump to critical areas quickly, and this greatly limits the need to scroll.

Hard drive installation is fairly simple and I don't foresee anyone running into any difficulties. The installation installs the executable file and a set-up program that you will need to run before playing Napalm. The set-up program is rather basic but I recommend you select "ask at boot up"

for resolution selection. This will enable you to find the best screen mode that suits your system. You may also have to give some thought to which network setting you want.

I initially played Napalm in HiRes interlaced and it looked gorgeous: almost as good as if I had a graphics card. For quite some time I couldn't get past simply looking at the incredibly detailed graphics and animations. However, in this screen mode, soldiers are quite small and things are a bit slow. Large battles tend to be too slow and tedious to play. Once I started playing the game seriously, I was forced to switch to LoRes PAL to speed things up. In LoRes PAL everything is larger and it doesn't look quite as good (but still very nice) but game play is much faster. I actually had to cut the game speed in half to slow it down while in LoRes PAL mode.

The manual recommends you have 20 Mb of free hard disk space but you still need the CD in the drive to access data during play. Napalm comes with very attractive packaging and an adequate manual and if you require more information or updates simply go to www.clickboom.com.

Minimum requirements in LoRes screen mode are: AGA, 020 CPU, 16 Mb Fast RAM, but an 030 CPU is recommended. To play in HiRes, ClickBOOM recommends an 060 CPU, 32 Mb RAM, GFX board, enabled CD music. I never managed to get the CD soundtrack to work on my system. I believe that was due to low Chip RAM; Napalm uses all it can get so you may need to kill some background system programs to free as much as possible. ClickBOOM didn't

answer my email inquiries about this problem.

I experienced one software failure during play and it was quite a big one. I had been playing for about an hour and a half and was gaining the upper hand on the enemy when it happened. I didn't save my progress and I lost so much that I thought I'd never play Napalm again. However, I began playing again the next day which is a testament to this game's addiction level.

I am not exactly overjoyed with ClickBOOM's new Portal web page. I tried to go there to download the Napalm 1.2 upgrade but it first made me enter my boom# which I had to look up, then it made me register Napalm online even though I sent in the registration card. I still was unable to download the upgrade because of a wait. I tried to visit the Portal again a week or so later and was unable to get to it at all even with my boom number. This sort of thing is very frustrating to me.

I think that every aspect of Napalm is very polished and feel that ClickBOOM has done a bang up job with this title. Even the transition screens looked slick. I'm pleased and actually surprised that such a sophisticated new game will run as well as it does on a low end Amiga. Even though I have little time to play this type of game I caught myself coming back to it again and again. I have no choice but to give Napalm an A rating.

Napalm was tested on an A1200 060, 50 Mb RAM, with 3.0 OS. Visit www.clickboom.com for all the latest ClickBOOM news.

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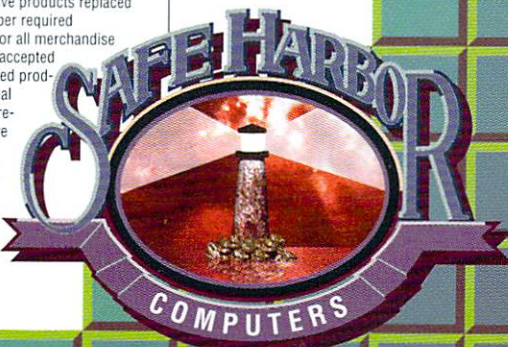
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